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# CHINA DAILY

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Residents of the southern Lebanese city of Nabatieh return to their homes on Saturday, following the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon. Upon arrival, they were met with shattered roads, damaged homes and collapsed buildings. The truce agreement mandates a 60-day halt to hostilities in a bid to end nearly 14 months of fighting. FADEL ITANI / NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

## Israel-Lebanon ceasefire appears shaky, experts warn

By CAI HONG  
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As renewed diplomatic efforts get underway to bring about a ceasefire in Gaza, experts have warned that there will be significant challenges in the path to implementing and enforcing a truce between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

On Thursday, an Egyptian security delegation traveled from Cairo to Israel to begin negotiations aimed at securing a Gaza ceasefire, according to two Egyptian

security sources cited by Reuters. The international community has been pressing for an end to hostilities in Gaza after a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon came into effect on Wednesday. If the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire holds, it would mark the end of nearly 14 months of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, which intensified in mid-September. However, the truce appears precarious. France24 reported that both sides have already accused the other of violations. While Hezbollah claimed Israeli forces fired on civilians, the Israeli military stated

its warplanes had struck southern Lebanon in response to what it described as Hezbollah activity at a suspected rocket storage site. In his first interview following the ceasefire, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned on Thursday that any breach of agreement by Hezbollah would trigger an "intensive war", according to the Times of Israel. Netanyahu said that he had directed the Israel Defense Forces to prepare for action beyond the current "surgical operations" in the event of a "massive violation of the agreement".

IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi claimed Hezbollah entered the ceasefire agreement "from a place of weakness and lack of options". Meanwhile, Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem, in his first televised address since the truce began, expressed optimism about cooperation with the Lebanese army. Speaking on Friday, he said he did not foresee "problems or disagreement" between Hezbollah and the Lebanese military, according to Al Jazeera.

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## Green is key to Sino-Brazilian collaboration

Following the high-level meeting between President Xi Jinping and President of Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva during the G20 Summit, it is worth reflecting on the direction of the Sino-Brazilian relationship and the areas in which there could be deeper collaboration. Brazil and China are massive countries, with different but complementary economic profiles, facing enormous challenges posed by climate change and the need for decarbonization. China is the second-largest economy in the world and its per capita income is about 20 percent higher than that of Brazil. As is natural for a large economy, Chinese companies are looking for investment and income-generating opportunities outside China. Although Brazil is already among the main destinations for Chinese investment, there are huge opportunities for further growth. The areas to highlight are infrastructure and decarbonization, especially in view of the fact that the COP30 climate summit will take place in Brazil in 2025. Brazil faces significant challenges when it comes to infrastructure investment, especially in the field of logistics. Although Chinese companies are well established in Brazil's electricity sector, the logistics segment still lacks a business model that China's financing

**WORLD WATCH**  
By Jose Pio Borges and Larissa Wachholz

agents are comfortable with. For Chinese banks, the guarantee of demand is a key factor while analyzing the feasibility of infrastructure projects, which require large sums of money and long-term capital. The electricity sector meets this requirement through purchase power agreements. For logistics, to help reduce risk and get as close as possible to what could be a guarantee of demand, it is important to bring Brazilian and Chinese agents closer together — investors, financiers and users of the infrastructure to be implemented. Engaging the users of the infrastructure from its conception is a prerequisite for the success of projects with Chinese capital. The level of understanding and adaptation of Chinese companies to the Brazilian market increase when teams are made of local executives, a factor to be highlighted. Brazil is one of the world's largest exporters of agricultural products, mainly soybeans, and China is its main destination. Brazil supplies 25 percent of China's agricultural imports.

Growing interdependence reinforces the need for efficient infrastructure — railroads, ports and warehousing — to support trade dynamics and reduce costs. Efficient logistics also means lower greenhouse gas emissions, which is a common goal. Among the business opportunities linked to decarbonization, converging with the discussions that will take place at the COP30 summit, we have the possibility of intensifying Brazilian agricultural production in 40 million hectares of currently underused, low-productivity agricultural lands. If raised to their full productive potential, those areas could double Brazil's agricultural production without deforestation. The result would be the low-carbon production of food, feed and feedstock that would support China's food security. It could also make a major contribution to the decarbonization of hard-to-abate sectors in which Chinese companies have global prominence, such as maritime shipping and sustainable aviation fuels. China's engagement in the productive intensification of Brazilian agriculture and livestock, in addition to allowing the Asian country to access critical inputs to feed its growing urban middle class, can contribute to the strategy of adding value and diversifying Brazil-

ian agricultural exports, as well as reindustrialization in a context of ecological transition. China's dual commitment to peak emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060 is mobilizing emissions-intensive sectors to seek solutions to help achieve the targets. Brazil can be a partner in this effort by being a supplier of sustainable fuels for Chinese shipping and aviation companies. In addition, production intensification carried out under sustainability criteria, including traceability and the use of low-carbon techniques, would be a major contribution to decarbonizing Brazilian agricultural production and to reducing the countries' emissions related to land use. That would be good for Brazil, China and the world. One possible path already exists: The Brazilian government has the National Program for the Conversion of Degraded Pastures, launched at the end of 2023. China could join forces and support the initiative, bringing together supply and demand for the green, low-carbon production that can result from it. Jose Pio Borges is chairman of the board of trustees and president of the Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI). Larissa Wachholz is a senior fellow at CEBRI and a partner at Vallha, a Brazilian consulting firm. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

### XI'S VISION | MAJOR COUNTRY DIPLOMACY

## Nations reap benefits from BRI projects

China-proposed initiative is helping build a global network of connectivity

By ZHANG YUNBI  
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Nicaraguan Ambassador to China Michael Campbell has been a keen advocate for the Belt and Road Initiative, which was proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013. On multiple occasions, he has called the BRI "an emblematic, groundbreaking proposal for the world".

The Central American country was a guest country of honor at the seventh China International Import Expo in Shanghai last

month, and the ambassador helped promote beef, seafood and coffee from his country. "Nicaragua is a part of China's emblematic cooperation programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative," he told China Daily. "We subscribe to the efforts that China does to create a more multipolar world — a world of peace, justice and equality," he added. As of last month, more than 150 countries and over 30 international organizations have signed Belt and Road cooperation documents with

China, and this cooperation has created more than 420,000 local jobs in partner countries, according to China's Foreign Ministry. The Institute of Party History and Literature of the Communist Party of China Central Committee has defined joint building of the Belt and Road as "a major innovative move of major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era". Jointly building the Belt and Road is "a major decision made to promote win-win cooperation and common development between China and the world", the institute said in an article published by People's Daily in April. So far, Belt and Road cooperation has galvanized nearly \$1 trillion in investment globally and lifted 40 million people out of poverty, according to the Foreign Ministry. Liu Weimin, China's ambassador to Tonga, wrote in an article last month that "as Belt and Road cooperation has entered its second decade, new opportunities are emerging". Since 2013, Belt and Road cooperation has spanned from the Eurasian region to Africa, Oceania and Latin America. See *Growth*, page 3

## Helping hand



A doctor of the 27th Chinese medical team provides free medical service on Saturday for a patient in Lokossa, Benin. The medical workers will work in the West African country for one-and-a-half years. XINHUA

## RISE OF AI PRESENTS DUAL CHALLENGES ON SECURITY FRONT

While the frontier technology is boosting police work, it is also being abused by criminals, fraudsters

By CAO YIN  
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While police use of artificial intelligence is achieving impressive results in analyzing data and solving cases, the frontier technology is also being used to commit new crimes and is presenting fresh challenges for actual police officers. In October, the Kunshan public security bureau in Jiangsu province said its AI team had played a crucial role in the detection and prevention of crimes, as the cutting-edge technology is able to promptly recognize suspicious activities and issue warnings. The bureau highlighted the

remarkable role of AI in combating telecom fraud, revealing one case earlier this year in which its AI team helped a local who had been cheated out of 980,000 yuan (\$135,300). The victim's statement was transmitted to the AI team's analysis center. Within 10 minutes, they had traced the flow of funds, successfully halting the transfer of 500,000 yuan and leading to the capture of nine suspects. See *AI*, page 2

INSIDE Just governance seen as basis for shared future Global Views, page 13  
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## PAGE TWO

## AI: Social awareness enhanced on new tech

From page 1

In Kunming, Yunnan province, however, police officers recently prevented an attempted scam in which the suspect used AI face-sweeping software to pretend he was a close friend of a local woman surnamed Wang. The suspect was planning to lure her to Guangdong province to deliver gold bars worth more than 300,000 yuan under the pretext of an emergency, according to a Guangming Daily report.

"The cases tell us that the safety of AI is as important as its development and application, which needs greater attention from all walks of life and stronger oversight to prevent the misuse and abuse of the technology," said Zheng Ning, head of the Law Department at the Communication University of China's Cultural Industries Management School.

She praised the wide application of AI to save time in searching and analyzing information, but also emphasized the importance of proper supervision of the technology.

Public concerns on security, privacy and authenticity related to AI have been rapidly growing, "making lots of countries, including us, have to follow up its development and draw the boundaries of what can be done and what must not be done," she added.

**New risks**

In October, a series of videos that used AI to imitate the voice of Lei Jun, founder and CEO of Chinese tech giant Xiaomi, went viral online, with the fake Lei seen commenting on hot social issues.

The real Lei said he was troubled by the videos, adding "I don't think using AI in this way is a good thing."

It was not the first time that someone has felt aggrieved after his or her voice was imitated by AI without permission.

In April, the Beijing Internet Court heard a lawsuit in which a voice-over artist surnamed Yin claimed that her voice had been used without her consent in audiobooks circulating online. The voice was processed by AI, the lawsuit said.

Yin sued five companies including a cultural media corporation that had provided recordings of her voice for unauthorized use, an AI software developer, and a voice-dubbing app operator.

After an investigation, the court found that the cultural media company sent Yin's recordings to the software developer without her permission. The software company then used AI to mimic Yin's voice and offered the AI-generated products for sale.

Zhao Ruigang, vice-president of the court and also the presiding judge in the case, said that the AI-powered voice mimicked Yin's vocal characteristics, intonation and pronunciation style to a high degree, adding "this level of similarity allowed for the identification of Yin's voice."

He cited the Civil Code, ruling that the behaviors of the cultural media enterprise and the AI software developer constituted an infringement of Yin's voice right.

The two defendants were ordered to pay her 250,000 yuan in compensation. The other companies, however, were not held liable for the infringement as they unknowingly used the AI-generated voice products, he said.

After announcing the verdict, Zhao said that the growing use of AI technology across various fields had raised new risks regarding personal rights, and called for tightening supervision of the technological service providers and platforms under specific provisions in current laws.

Some AI fraudsters have also taken advantage of AI-generated rumors on disasters and diseases, which has disturbed the order in cyberspace and caused public panic.

The number of economic and enterprise rumors generated by AI increased by 99 percent in the past year, according to a report released by a Tsinghua University research center in April.

**Regulatory controls**

The large amount of polluted information on AI platforms and abuse of AI-generated content, have made more people



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

“The management and supervision of AI and its generative content is always on the move. It's a process that constantly needs to be improved.”

Wang Sixin, professor of internet law at the Communication University of China

realize that what they see is not necessarily real, prompting them to demand stronger oversight and more comprehensive management of the technology.

In August 2023, China issued an interim regulation to manage AI-generated services and products, aiming to safeguard national security and protect people's legitimate rights and interests, while promoting development of the technology.

The regulation, which was jointly formulated by seven authorities, including the Cyberspace Administration of China, the Ministry of Public Security and the

Ministry of Science and Technology, highlights the protection of personal data and intellectual property.

It requires AI-generated service providers to improve the accuracy and reliability of generated information and to label such content. The interim regulation also requires regular security assessments as well as measures to prevent juveniles from becoming addicted to AI services.

In August this year, the European Union gave final approval to an AI law that takes a "risk-based approach" to products and services that use AI, stating that the riskier an AI application is, the more scrutiny it faces.

The law stipulates that AI-generated deepfake pictures, video and audio of existing people, places, and events must be labeled as artificially manipulated.

Earlier, Brussels also suggested broader AI rules, while some US states are working on their own AI legislation.

Similar legislative guardrails are being considered in countries around the world, as well as by global groups such as the United Nations and the Group of Seven industrialized nations.

**Striking a balance**

Compared with rules and guidelines made by other nations and organizations, China's

AI management is more like a tool kit, said Zhu Wei, deputy head of the Communication Law Research Center at the China University of Political Science and Law.

"Instead of putting all AI-related content into an individual law, our AI management can be seen in many laws and rules, such as the Civil Code and the interim regulation," he said.

"We're building a legal system to develop, manage and supervise AI."

Zheng, from the Communication University of China, said that China's management of AI is more flexible, which not only clarifies the boundaries for operators and users, but also leaves them more space for innovation and development.

"The bottom line is to neither damage national security and data security, nor bring damage to others," she said.

The development and application of AI technology cannot violate the National Security Law, the Data Security Law, the Cybersecurity Law and the Law on Personal Information Protection, according to Zheng.

"Under such a legal framework, it is crucial to refine rules for AI development in some major areas, such as finance, education, transportation and medical care to meet more needs of the people and industries," she said.

"It's not easy to achieve a balance between the security and development of the emerging technology, so it's urgent and necessary for more walks of life, including government agencies, judicial authorities, internet platforms and the public, to jointly participate in the management," she added.

Wang Sixin, a professor of internet law at the Communication University of China, said that seeking this balance is not achievable overnight. It requires long-term effort and refinement, as there are many uncertainties in technological development.

"Technological developments allow us to discover new problems and also urge us to find ways to solve them," he said.

"The management and supervision of AI and its generative content is always on the move. It's a process that constantly needs to be improved," he said. "Therefore, relevant rules or provisions should be made flexibly and not be too detailed."

Wang compared AI to a knife that can cut both vegetables and meat. "The key is what the person using the knife wants to do," he said, adding this is why management and oversight in China focus more on how to enhance the legal and security awareness of AI developers, operators and users.

## China launches artificial intelligence platform to boost judicial efficiency

By CAO YIN

After being used in areas such as education, tourism and healthcare, artificial intelligence is also being considered for China's judicial system to help judges improve work efficiency and give people easier access to legal services.

Yu Maoyu, editor-in-chief of the People's Court Press, unveiled an AI-generated judicial platform during a news conference at the Supreme People's Court in November. Yu said it had already been registered with China's cyberspace authority.

"The platform is a national-level legal AI

infrastructure built on massive, authoritative and high-quality judicial data," Yu said, revealing that it had gathered 320 million pieces of legal information including court rulings, cases and legal opinions.

The platform can integrate vast information and quickly generate content in accordance with a user's requirements, as it is able to understand legal terms and logical reasoning, Yu added.

Zhang Chengbing, another official from the People's Court Press, said the platform can save judges time and energy in looking up and reviewing legal material and selecting cases, even though elec-

tronic devices already assist them.

"The platform can analyze and compare information from a large number of electronic files, with a quicker response to catch key points and extract outlines, so as to further improve judicial efficiency," he explained.

"To put it simply, it will be a legal assistant of judges, serving them in classifying legal information and reducing their burden in handling a rising number of cases," he said.

After the platform is further trained and optimized, it will also provide public legal services. A wider spectrum of people, such

as residents, will be able to use it to meet their legal demands, Zhang said.

"For example, it will offer opinions and suggestions on mediation and litigation for people based on their specific situations, after understanding their non-professional queries on legal issues, so that they can access legal services and consultations more easily," he said.

It is not the first time that the top court has used emerging technologies to improve the efficiency and quality of case handling. The AI-powered platform is its latest step to make its courts "smarter".

Earlier this year, the top court opened an

online archive for the public to search for landmark and major civil, criminal and administrative cases. The archive is intended as a timely response to public concerns on legal issues, such as mental abuse, cyberbullying, telecom fraud, domestic violence and justifiable defense.

Over the past decade, Chinese courts have also established multiple online platforms, including one for searching verdicts and one for attending trials. The online platforms aim to streamline legal procedures and offer litigants more convenient ways to follow their cases and access legal services.

## TOP NEWS

## New rocket marks debut mission of launch center

By ZHAO LEI in Wenchang, Hainan  
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China's carrier rocket fleet has expanded further, as the newest type in the Long March family, the Long March 12, made its debut flight on Saturday night from Wenchang, Hainan province.

The flight also marked the first mission of the Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Center, the nation's first spaceport dedicated to facilitating commercial operations.

As a large crowd of spectators gathered at the coastal launch complex, four liquid oxygen-kerosene engines on the rocket's first stage roared with dazzling flames at 10:25 pm, and the rocket rose into the night sky from the No 2 launch pad at the new space complex.

After a short while, two experimental satellites separated from the rocket and entered their preset orbit, marking the success of the launch mission.

Designed by the Shanghai Aerospace System Engineering Institute, the Long March 12 is the 22nd member of the Long March family, the backbone of China's space sector, and the 17th in the operating fleet.

The institute is part of the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology, which belongs to the State-owned industry conglomerate China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp.

The Long March 12 is the first Chinese rocket with a diameter of 3.8 meters. Most Chinese rockets have a diameter of 3.35 meters, a standard width set in the 1960s due to rail transportation factors.

At 62.6 meters tall, the two-stage model is the second-tallest among all Chinese rockets, exceeded only by the 62.8-meter Long March 5.

The vehicle is propelled by engines fueled by liquid oxygen and kerosene and has a liftoff weight of more than 430 metric tons. It is capable of transporting spacecraft with a combined weight of more than 12 tons to a low-Earth orbit, or 6 tons of satellites to a typical sun-synchronous orbit at an altitude of 700 kilometers, according to the Shanghai academy.

The new model will effectively improve China's capability to send spacecraft to a sun-synchronous orbit and deploy satellite networks in low orbits, it noted, adding that research and development started in May 2020 and finished in June this year.

Xie Li, a senior designer of the new model, said the rocket features new technologies and equipment.

"It is the first Chinese rocket equipped with an automatic ignition-malfunction detection system. ... After the engines are ignited, the system will detect whether the engines are functioning well, and if the result is good, the system will unleash the hold-down clamps, allowing the engines to reach full power to lift off.

"When the rocket begins to fly, the system will continue performing real-time checks on the vehicle's condition, and if any anomaly occurs, the system will take necessary measures such as to replan the trajectory to make sure the satellites can be deployed into their preset orbit," he said.

Another advantage is that the new type needs a short time for prelaunch preparations at the service tower, which means that the launch facility can serve more space missions in a given time, thus enhancing the spaceport's operational efficiency, according to the designer.

In addition, the fuel tank of the rocket's second stage is made of a cutting-edge aluminum alloy that boasts lighter weight and better strength.

"Compared with other types of aluminum alloy used on older Long March-series rockets, the new material is up to 15 percent lighter in structural weight and 28 percent higher in tensile strength," Xie said.

Regarding the 3.8-meter diameter, he said that a wider body enables the rocket to have four engines on its first stage, while the 3.35-meter-wide models have two. Moreover, being wider means the rocket can contain more propellants. All of these give the new model a greater carrying capacity, he added.

The Long March 12 mission marked China's 59th space launch this year and the 548th flight of the Long March family.



## Ravaging deluge

Boys ride their bicycles through a flooded street amid heavy rain on Saturday in the town of Pasir Puteh in Kelantan, Malaysia. Flooding in northern Malaysia and southern Thailand has killed at least 12 people and forced tens of thousands to evacuate from their homes.

MOHD RASFAN / AFP

## Manufacturing sector on track for recovery

Stimulus measures restore market confidence amid challenges

By OUYANG SHIJIA  
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China's manufacturing sector showed signs of sustained recovery in November, as recent stimulus measures restored confidence among consumers and investors, pointing to strong economic resilience amid ongoing global and domestic challenges, analysts said on Sunday.

The government's focus will remain on stabilizing growth through continued fiscal stimulus, including measures aimed at stimulating consumer demand and improving the housing market, they said.

They also expect that these efforts will contribute to a modest improvement in GDP growth in the fourth quarter, which is projected to reach around 5.3 percent year-on-year, marking a significant rebound from the 4.6 percent growth seen in the third quarter.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Saturday that China's official purchasing

managers index for the manufacturing sector rose from 50.1 in October to 50.3 in November, remaining above the 50 mark that separates expansion from contraction for the second consecutive month and hitting a seven-month high.

"With the introduction of a package of incremental policies and the effects of existing policies gradually emerging, the level of economic prosperity has steadily improved in November," said Zhao Qinghe, an NBS statistician.

NBS data also showed that the gauge for manufacturers' expectations for production and operation stood at 54.7 in November, compared with 54 in October, indicating that manufacturers' optimism and confidence are growing.

"China's manufacturing sector showed signs of recovery in November with improvement in both demand and supply, buoyed by a combination of stimulus policy measures as well as increased workdays in November," said Wu Chaoming, deputy director of the

Chasing International Economic Institute.

The subindex for production was 52.4 in November, compared with 52 in October, while the gauge for new orders came in at 50.8 in November, up from 50 in October, NBS data showed.

"With the incremental policies further taking effect and various regions beefing up efforts to stabilize growth to meet this year's growth target, China's economy is on track for a notable rebound in the fourth quarter, as factory activity is set to expand for the third consecutive month in December," said Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Golden Credit Rating International. Wang said China's GDP growth for the fourth quarter is projected to reach approximately 5.3 percent year-on-year, putting the nation on track to meet its annual GDP growth target of around 5 percent this year.

Despite the uptick in manufacturing PMI, China's nonmanufacturing PMI, which includes subindexes for activity in the services and construc-

tion sectors, dropped from 50.2 in October to 50 in November. Meanwhile, the country's official composite PMI, which encompasses both manufacturing and nonmanufacturing activities, came in at 50.8 in November, the same as the figure in October.

"Current market demand still requires further stimulation, and the pace of macroeconomic recovery remains moderate," Wang said.

Wang said he believes that "whether the macroeconomy can break free from downward pressures depends largely on whether the real estate market can quickly stabilize and reverse its downward trend", adding that a significant change in the external trade environment in 2025 will also be the key.

Against that backdrop, he said timely reinforcement of countercyclical adjustment will provide important support for future improvement in manufacturing activity and the broader macroeconomic outlook.

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, noted that "recent policy dynamics signal a strong turning of overall government policy in trying to bolster economic growth, boost confidence and stabilize expectations".

Xing said he expects to see additional fiscal stimulus in the coming months, including measures to drive trade-in deals for consumer goods, provide childbirth subsidies, and offer more social welfare benefits for low-income groups.

## Growth: BRI hailed as 'important engine of globalization'

From page 1

Within the BRI framework, a global network of connectivity is taking shape, consisting of economic corridors, international transportation routes and information highways, and a large number of signature projects and "small yet smart" people-centered programs have been launched, analysts noted.

"The BRI has delivered remarkable increases in connectivity," London-based think tank ODI Global said in a report released in September.

The BRI and China's financing "have played an instrumental role" in closing the infrastructure financing gap in many developing countries, and the partner countries' own domestic situations "will remain a crucial factor in determining the outcomes of the BRI", the report said.

Last month in Lima, Peru, President Xi and Peruvian President

Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra attended the opening ceremony of Chancay Port, a flagship BRI project, via video link.

The first phase of the project, when completed, will reduce the shipping time between Peru and China to 23 days, thus cutting logistics costs by at least 20 percent.

The project is expected to generate \$4.5 billion in yearly revenue for Peru and create more than 8,000 jobs.

The Peruvian president said at the ceremony that the Peru-China BRI project will help Peru establish itself as a crucial gateway connecting Latin America and Asia, while also fostering integration and prosperity across Latin America.

Similarly, Pacific island country Samoa has seen remarkable benefits from the BRI and the nation's evolving cooperation with China.

Samoa was one of the first Pacific island countries to establish diplo-

matic relations with the People's Republic of China and to sign a memorandum of understanding on Belt and Road cooperation with China.

Samoa's China-aided government building, which features on its new banknotes, has become a popular spot for locals to visit and take photos.

"Faleolo International Airport, renovated with the support of a Chinese company, is one of the most modernized international airports in the South Pacific," China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said last week.

Kong Xianhua, consul general of the Chinese consulate in Mumbai, India, said in a signed article last week that the BRI "has emerged as the most important new engine of globalization and injected positive stabilizing energy, advocating peaceful development in this uncertain world".

Last year, China's annual trade with BRI partner countries reached 19.5 trillion yuan (\$2.7 trillion), accounting for 46.6 percent of China's total import and export volume in 2023, a record high since the BRI was proposed.

Sun Zhuangzhi, director of the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said "the BRI today no longer relies solely on infrastructure construction, and it has evolved comprehensively to boost links of hardware, software and the bonds of different nations".

Furthermore, he said, the BRI "has entered a phase eyeing lasting development, and it has become a key path to solidarity, economic recovery and growth, making contributions to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind".

## Ceasefire: 'Resolution to Palestinian question' seen as only way to true peace

From page 1

"The resistance will remain prepared to prevent the enemy from exploiting Lebanon's weaknesses, alongside our partners ... first and foremost the army," Qassem added.

The ceasefire involves a 60-day transition period during which the IDF will withdraw from southern Lebanon, and the Lebanese army will deploy approximately 5,000 troops south of the Litani River. Under the agreement, Hezbollah is prohibited from operating in this area, which lies several kilometers from the border.

Speaking to Israel's Channel 14, Netanyahu suggested the ceasefire "could be short".

Meanwhile, a poll conducted by Channel 12 revealed mixed reactions from Israelis: half of the respondents believed Hezbollah has not been defeated, while 30 percent thought the ceasefire will ultimately collapse.

The Guardian described the truce as "shaky at best", highlighting the uncertain backdrop of a power transition in the United States, as President-elect Donald Trump prepares to replace the administration of Joe Biden with his "America First" agenda.

Middle East expert Wang Jin expressed doubts about the Lebanese army's ability to enforce the ceasefire, noting that it is "smaller, underfunded and outgunned by Hezbollah".

"Israel's hostile relationships with other regional actors, such as Iran,

are unlikely to improve in the short term as a result of the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire," Wang, associate professor at the Institute of Middle East Studies in Northwest University, Xi'an, Shaanxi province, said.

He also pointed out that the conflict in Gaza is far from over. "Israel's primary objective in Gaza remains the use of force to rescue Israeli hostages," Wang explained. "The ceasefire agreement is unlikely to be replicated in other complex and hostile dynamics across the Middle East."

Dong Manyuan, a research fellow at the Department for Developing Countries Studies of the China Institute of International Studies, described the ceasefire as a critical

opportunity for US President Biden to shape his "diplomatic legacy" in the Middle East before leaving office.

"The Biden administration is aiming to leave a 'symbol of peace' by brokering the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire," Dong said. "After the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US urgently needs such 'diplomatic achievements' to repair its image on the global stage."

Dong said the US seeks to demonstrate its continued influence in the Middle East while ensuring that the situation in Lebanon does not escalate into broader regional instability.

However, even as the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon takes

effect, the Biden administration is moving forward with a \$680 million arms sales package to Israel, according to the Financial Times. The deal includes thousands of joint direct attack munition kits and hundreds of small-diameter bombs.

Analysts said that the Palestinian question remains at the heart of the Middle East's challenges. As long as the war in Gaza persists, achieving regional stability will be difficult. True peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution to the Palestinian question.

In an article for Foreign Affairs, Jonah Blank, adjunct senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, a US nonprofit global policy

think tank, said that when Biden leaves office in January, the already slim chances of achieving a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may vanish entirely.

Currently, 146 of the 193 United Nations member states recognize Palestinian statehood, including over a dozen NATO allies.

Blank noted that US recognition could significantly shift global dynamics. "If the United States shifted its position, the rest of the international holdouts might likewise do so overnight," he wrote. "Biden should recognize Palestine the same way president Harry Truman recognized the state of Israel in 1948."

Blank added that Trump spent his first term enabling Netanyahu's agenda and his cabinet picks suggest his second administration will do little to rein in Israel.

## CHINA

## Puppet on parade



A puppet resembling the character Princess Aouda from Jules Verne's famous science fiction novel *Around the World in Eighty Days* interacts with children during a parade from Victoria Park to Causeway Bay at a youth arts festival in Hong Kong on Sunday.

HOU YU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Freight train a key link between China, Europe

By LUO WANGSHU in Chongqing  
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The China-Europe freight train, a hallmark of the Belt and Road Initiative, has become a vital bridge for trade and connectivity between China and Europe, playing an increasingly important role in promoting open cooperation, mutual benefit and economic integration among participating countries.

The X8083 train — loaded with goods such as electronic products, home appliances, auto parts and daily necessities — is making its 100,000th trip to Europe from China. It departed from Tuanjie Village Station in Chongqing on Nov 15 and is en route to Duisburg, Germany. It is scheduled to arrive in the German city on Tuesday.

Once it arrives, the freight train will have successfully transported more than 11 million twenty-foot equivalent units of goods, valued at over \$420 billion.

Since its launch in 2011, the service has significantly transformed global trade, improving connectivity between China and Europe. It has maintained a strong record of safe, stable and efficient operations, becoming an essential part of the international logistics system.

The achievement highlights the rapid growth of the rail corridor connecting China and Europe, facilitating the smooth and reliable movement of goods between continents.

"The China-Europe freight train service is an important carrier for open cooperation and mutual benefit among the countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. It has created a new, all-weather, high-capacity, green and low-carbon transportation route that has become a popular international public good," said Li Chao, deputy director of the policy research office of the National Development and Reform Commission.

The China-Europe freight train service is less affected by natural environmental factors, offering higher stability. Its cost is only one-fifth of air freight, and its transit time is one-quarter that of sea transport, which makes it highly favored

by many clients, he added.

Last year, the value of goods transported via the China-Europe freight train accounted for more than 7 percent of the total trade between China and Europe.

"The China-Europe freight train was established in response to the steady growth of trade between China and Europe and further strengthened by the Belt and Road Initiative," said Wang Yangkun, head of the Transport Technology Development Research Center at the National Development and Reform Commission's Institute of Comprehensive Transportation.

Despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis, the service has demonstrated resilience and has grown into a vital artery for cross-border transport and logistics between Asia and Europe, he added.

Wang also noted that the key advantages of the service include shorter transit times, lower costs compared with air freight, significant savings in inland logistics and an extensive service network.

Over the past 13 years, the China-Europe freight train service network has rapidly expanded from several routes to a fully integrated network covering most of the Eurasian region. The service now covers 227 cities in 25 European countries and over 100 cities in 11 Asian countries. This broad and expanding network has transformed the logistics landscape between China and Europe, offering more options for businesses across diverse regions.

An increasingly diverse variety of goods are also transported via the service. The China-Europe freight train transports more than 50,000 types of goods spanning 53 categories, including automobiles, machinery, electronic products and epidemic prevention materials, according to China State Railway Group, the operator of the service.

## Mutual benefit

The China-Europe freight train service has created a faster trade route to help more Chinese-made products such as electronics, home appliances and new energy vehi-

cles reach Europe more rapidly and with cheaper price tags. This has provided more affordable options for European consumers, while also opening up new trade channels for European manufacturers and traders to enter the Chinese market.

The trains departing from cities such as Jinan and Qingdao in Shandong province have provided crucial support for major companies such as Haier and Hisense in their international trade efforts. To date, more than 20,000 import and export enterprises using the service have shipped over 840,000 TEUs of goods and facilitated a trade value of over 100 billion yuan, the company said.

It also facilitates delivery of European goods to China. Poland has a long history of growing apples, and the China-Europe freight train service has made it easier for Polish apples to be shipped and sold to Chinese markets.

While it takes about 40 days for freight by sea to reach China, the freight train service can cut the journey between China and Poland to about 14 days. Last year, the value of apples imported into the country from Poland grew by 23.2 percent compared to 2022, according to the company.

At a bonded store at Hankou Railway Station in Wuhan, Hubei province, many visitors shop for overseas products delivered by China-Europe freight trains. The products at the store are imported via freight trains returning from Europe, bringing goods from countries along the rail network, including Germany, Italy, Poland, Turkey, Russia and Kazakhstan.

The store offers 10,000 such products ranging from food and beverages to crafts and cosmetics.

Li Wenyuan, who is in charge of handling the import of bonded goods from the China-Europe freight train in Hubei, said: "We import high-quality, distinctive products from countries along the China-Europe Railway to China. Currently, there are over 10 categories of goods being imported, including grains, oils, food, bevera-

ges, instant products, home and personal care items and craft.

"Most of these goods are sourced directly from their origin, which makes them diverse, high-quality and cost-effective," Li said. "Snacks, drinks and beauty products are the bestsellers. Thanks to tax incentives, the prices at our stores are even more appealing."

Apart from benefiting Chinese people, more residents from across Eurasia are also benefiting from this corridor.

For instance, the freight train service has led more than 100 logistics companies to settle in Duisburg Port, creating more than 20,000 jobs.

In addition, many China-made products are easily shipped to Europe thanks to the service. Chen Xu, from the Wuhan Office of China Railway Container Transport, said the service has delivered new energy vehicles from Hubei province to European countries.

"We offer combined logistics solutions, including road, waterway and railway, to customers, attracting export shipments of new energy vehicles from surrounding regions," he said.

In the first 10 months of this year, the Wuhan office shipped 133 containers of NEVs. The total value of NEV exports exceeded 57 million yuan (\$7.8 million). Major car brands include Dongfeng, BYD, Chery and Geely, he said.

In Ganzhou, Jiangxi province, the development of the China-Europe freight train has helped its local furniture market go global.

Liao Xiang, manager of Jiangxi Sanyou Furniture, said: "Our company primarily manufactures office furniture and outdoor furniture, with its original market focusing mostly on domestic sales. With the opening of the China-Europe freight train service from Ganzhou, the export logistics costs have been significantly reduced. We now use the service to sell high-quality office and outdoor furniture to Hungary, Italy and other countries."

Liu Boqian contributed to this story.

## Rise in foreign trademark registrations

Improved IP protections and dispute response facilitate confidence boost

By CAO YIN  
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**121,000**  
trademarks

were registered by foreign entities in China from January to October.

A growing number of trademarks have been filed by foreign entities in China this year, thanks to stronger intellectual property protection and a quicker response time in tackling IP-related affairs, an official from the country's top IP regulator said.

Data released by the China National Intellectual Property Administration on Friday showed that from January to October, 121,000 foreign trademarks were registered in China, up 13.1 percent year-on-year.

During the same period, 92,000 foreign invention patents were also authorized in the country, an increase of 5.3 percent year-on-year, the data showed.

"The numbers have fully reflected the satisfaction of foreign-funded companies with our country's IP protection, as well as our endeavors in building a sound business environment by rule of law," said Guo Wen, head of the administration's IP protection division.

While firmly giving equal protection to every market entity regardless of where it is from, China has also taken initiative to align international economic and trade rules and has strengthened exchanges with foreign-funded enterprises by holding seminars to learn about their needs and difficulties in the IP field, she said.

"In addition, we've intensified the fight against malicious trademark registration, with better handling of IP cases involving enterprises from the United States, Germany, France, Italy, Thailand and Denmark after seeing sufficient evidence in these disputes," she added.

She pledged that progress will continue to be made to create a

more fair, transparent and predictable business environment, as well as to constantly inject confidence into the development of foreign companies in the Chinese market.

While seeing rapid IP growth brought by foreign entities, China has also witnessed the development of its own enterprises over the past few months.

According to the data, China has had 4.66 million valid invention patents filed as of the end of October, 235,000 more than the number reported in June.

The average time it takes to review an invention patent has been reduced to 15.6 months, according to the data in October, from 16 months last year, showing the country is becoming more efficient when it comes to examining IP rights, said Heng Fuguang, spokesman for the administration.

As of June, the number of high-value invention patents per 10,000 people also reached 12.9, achieving the goal set in the nation's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) ahead of schedule, he added.

Heng said that more IP rights have been applied for in more fields to bring more profits for enterprises and accelerate industrial development.

"To serve high-level opening-up, our international cooperation on IP has also been enhanced, as 151 centers for supporting technological innovation have been set up in China under joint efforts between the country and the World Intellectual Property Organization," he added.

## Snow study



A foreign student, a member of a study group comprising students from 11 countries, draws snowflakes at Beicang Cultural Park in Chongqing's Jiangbei district on Sunday.

TAN YINGZI / CHINA DAILY

## Long March 8 prepares for launch at Hainan center

By ZHAO LEI and CHEN BOWEN  
in Wenchang, Hainan

The Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Center in Wenchang, a coastal city in Hainan province, is preparing for its second mission: a launch of the Long March 8 carrier rocket, according to the new spaceport's general manager.

Liu Hongjian said at a news conference at the center on Saturday that the Long March 8 rocket has been transported to the center, and

engineers from all relevant parties have been busy working on its pre-launch preparations.

The launch is scheduled to take place at the No 1 launch pad before the end of this year, he said.

Located in Wenchang, the Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Center is a joint venture of the Hainan provincial government and three State-owned space conglomerates, including China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp.

Construction of the center, which

began in July 2022, was undertaken by China Aerospace Construction Group.

Its No 1 launch service tower was completed in late December and is specifically tasked with servicing Long March 8 carrier rockets.

The second tower was finished in early June. It is capable of servicing 19 types of liquid-propellant carrier rockets, including those in the Long March family and models developed by private companies.

On Saturday night, a Long March 12 rocket was launched from the No

2 tower, marking the model's debut flight and the new center's first space mission.

"The No 2 tower is capable of servicing rockets of different sizes, ranging from the 3.35-meter-wide types to those with a 5-meter diameter. That means it is suitable for all of China's commercial rockets," Liu said. "Each of the two launch towers can facilitate up to 16 launches each year."

The commercial spaceport has become the fifth ground-based launch complex in China and the

first dedicated to facilitating commercial space missions, which are generally paid for by a business entity rather than government-funded programs.

The Wenchang Space Launch Center, the other spaceport in Hainan, is like the three other such centers in China — Jiuquan, Taiyuan and Xichang — administered by the central government and is primarily tasked with serving State programs such as lunar explorations and manned spaceflights.

Designed and built by the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, a subsidiary of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, the Long March 8 has two

core stages and two side boosters. It has six engines propelled by liquid oxygen, liquid hydrogen and kerosene.

The model performed its debut mission in December 2020 from the Wenchang Space Launch Center.

The Long March 8 is capable of transporting various types of spacecraft to multiple types of orbit, but its main task is to place satellites in sun-synchronous orbit to meet the surging demand for launch services from commercial satellite companies at home and abroad, according to the academy.

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**Editor's note:** As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.



**From left:** Zhang Shifang promotes her No 38 Farm Stay in Dazhou town, Chongqing, last month. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Children play at a small square in Xujiachong village in Yichang, Hubei province, in October 2022. The village, only 500 meters away from the Three Gorges Dam, is the new home for residents of three villages that were submerged by the dam's reservoir. Homestays and folk crafts have turned the village into a popular stop for tourists visiting the dam. ZHANG GUORONG / FOR CHINA DAILY Artisans make embroidery products at Xujiachong village. ZHANG GUORONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

By LI PEIXUAN  
in Wanzhou, Chongqing  
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## Relocated communities make most of Three Gorges' funding

Investment, subsidies help some 1.3 million people find new lives

Twenty-one years after the switch being flicked on at the world's largest hydroelectric power project at the Three Gorges Dam in Central China's Hubei province, millions of terawatts of green energy has been generated, the threat of devastating floods along the Yangtze River has been reduced and navigation on Asia's longest waterway has been made easier.

In order for this megaproject to take place, the dam would result in the water level along certain stretches of the Yangtze rising by as much as 100 meters, displacing as many as 1.3 million people.

Resettling these communities, often just a few hundred meters from their previous homes, has been an equally monumental task that, with subsidies and investment, has added to the benefits already created by the dam and power station.

### Prosperous move

The No 38 Farm Stay in Wutu village of Dazhou town, Chongqing, enjoys sweeping views of the Yangtze River. Each year, some 6,000 guests visit to enjoy the natural scenery and get a taste of country life.

Zhang Shifang, the proprietor of the farm stay is one of the locals that were relocated 15 years ago. "My former house and land were submerged just 100 meters from the farm stay here," she said.

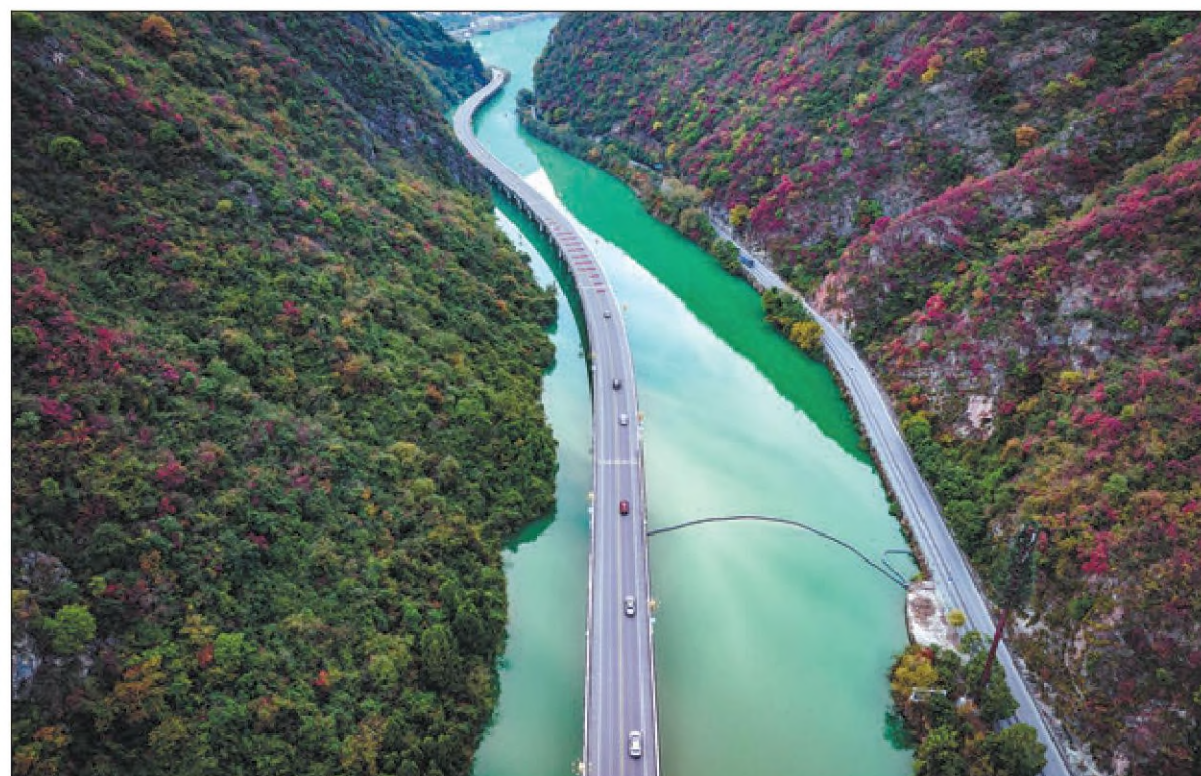
Among the various resettlement alternatives provided by the government, she opted to receive a resettlement subsidy, and then decided to work in a big city to earn a higher salary.

In 2019, on a return trip home to visit her mother, Zhang noticed something odd. Wutu was bustling with tourists, and new roads and infrastructure had been built all around the village.

It turned out the projects stemmed from the post-relocation support funds allocated for the Three Gorges Dam resettlement, and the resulting facilities had enabled a flourishing tourism industry to spring up.

Noticing an opportunity, Zhang decided to return to the village permanently and establish the No 38 Farm Stay.

"We not only provide dining here, but also offer karaoke, tug-of-war, badminton, chess, checkers, mahjong — which is very popular in Sichuan and Chongqing — and



A highway connecting Gufu and Zhaojun towns in Xingshan county, Hubei province, dubbed "China's most beautiful highway on the water". WU ZHIZUN / XINHUA

there's a square nearby where visitors can play ball games," she said.

In the years since its opening, Zhang said the farm stay has enabled her to earn as much as 300,000 yuan (\$41,790) every year, more than what she would be able to earn elsewhere.

Farm stays have become a popular business in the area, and 45 farm stays now employ 200 local people.

"In Dazhou town, the Three Gorges Project affected 4,857 individuals, and many of them lost their land due to the rising water. To enhance income and prosperity for the relocatees, the town has tried hard to support them starting up farm stay

businesses, with the aim of establishing a demonstration town for rural tourism," said Zhou Jianhong, Party secretary of Dazhou town.

With the Three Gorges post-relocation support funds and follow-up project funds, the town has curated a collection of unique attractions such as the winding 10-kilometer riverside promenade and the sun-moon square in Wutu village. These attractions have garnered widespread recognition in Chongqing, attracting approximately 200,000 tourists to visit Wutu village each year, according to Zhou.

Last year, Dazhou town's cultural tourism increased by 10 million

yuan year-on-year for farmers, and by 3 million yuan for poverty-alleviated households, Zhou said.

### Better environment

A total of 168 projects, aimed at helping relocatees settle and prosper, improve the ecological environment, and enhance the safety in reservoir areas in Xingshan county of Yichang, Hubei province, have been approved for construction. Some 160 of those have been completed, using 2.5 billion yuan in funding from the Three Gorges follow-up special subsidy, said Long Jingli, deputy head of Xingshan county.

One of the projects, the highway from Gufu town to Zhaojun town in Xingshan, has become known for being China's "most beautiful highway on the water" as it skirts the river bank.

Stretching 20.25 kilometers, the winding highway that traverses the Xiangxi River offers travelers the opportunity to relish mountain vistas and river views akin to a painting. Private vehicles, intercity buses and coach tours ply the road back and forth, with its observation decks and platforms enticing numerous tourists and artists who come from far and wide to sketch the vistas.

It's practical too. When the high-

way opened to traffic in late 2015, the journey time from Xingshan county to Yichang was reduced to a mere 1.5 hours, greatly facilitating the travel of the people of Xingshan and significantly augmenting the income of resettlers in Shenduhe village, Gufu town, Xingshan county.

Wan Wei, Party secretary of Shenduhe village, said, "40 percent of the population in Shenduhe village are resettlers from the reservoir-affected area."

Before the road was built, the transportation cost was very high. Buyers would have to drive all the way to Shenduhe village to purchase citrus fruits in bulk for just 0.5 yuan per kilogram, which was the main source of income for the villagers, said Wan.

After the completion of the road, the villagers themselves could travel further and sell these fruits for 1.5–2 yuan per kilogram, reclaiming pricing control and tripling their incomes, he added.

Last year, the average annual household income in Shenduhe village reached around 19,000 yuan, and over 85 percent of households owned a car. The village's total revenue exceeded 28 million yuan, a one-third increase from 2015, Wan said.

In other towns of Xingshan county, the Three Gorges follow-up special subsidy has also significantly improved the quality of life of the people relocated.

Chenjiawan village, with more than 300 residents relocated to higher ground, launched the Zhaojun Manor project in March 2015, renovating the facades of 97 buildings, constructing 6,850 square meters of green space, converting 96 latrines into flushing toilets and developing 19.5 km of comprehensive networks for rainwater, sewage and communication, greatly enhancing the village's appearance and living environment.

Li Xiaojiao, deputy secretary of the Chenjiawan village Party committee, said it used to be an unclean and disorderly place. "By leveraging a total investment of 46 million yuan, including the Three Gorges subsidy, the town now has a very tidy and stylish appearance and has become a place popular for cultural tourism, attracting 830,000 tourists since 2015, and achieving a total tourism revenue of approximately 50 million yuan."

In Xingshan county, the Three Gorges reservoir submerged a 9.3-square-kilometer area resulting in the relocation of 34,300 residents.

Qin Shuang contributed to this story.

## Record-breaking project still bringing manifold benefits

By LI PEIXUAN

The Three Gorges Project, as the world's largest water control and hydroelectric project, has delivered immense benefits in mitigating flooding, power generation, navigation and water regulation.

"Since its construction, the Three Gorges Reservoir has successfully controlled flooding on almost 70 occasions, with a total volume of intercepted floodwater exceeding 220 billion cubic meters," said Xu Changyi, Three Gorges Group's Party chief for the hub operation and management of the Yangtze River Basin.

At the junction of the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River, the Three Gorges project is located adjacent to the most severe flood-prone section of the Jingjiang River — an alternate name for a section of the Yangtze's middle reach that winds and twists. These

characteristics make it challenging for efficient flood passage — and thus enable it to control over 95 percent of the floodwater in the Jingjiang River and about two-thirds of the floodwater above Wuhan, Hubei province, a populous city and an important industrial hub, according to Xu.

"The primary function of the Three Gorges Project is flood control, and the greatest benefit is also derived from flood control," Xu added.

During the flood season in 2020, the Three Gorges Dam successfully controlled five major flood events, with a peak storage capacity in the reservoir of 29.5 billion cubic meters.

The Three Gorges Dam demonstrated its remarkable flood control capability in the fifth major flood, the largest flood since its inception. It cut the maximum flood peak flow from 78,000 cubic

meters per second to 49,400 cubic meters per second, reducing these flows by more than a third, effectively avoiding the evacuation of 600,000 people and the flooding over 32,670 hectares of farmland, according to Xu.

The floodwaters of the Yangtze River have not only been controlled but also converted into a massive amount of electric power.

In 2020, the Three Gorges Power Plant generated 111.8 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, setting a world record for annual power generation volume, according to Cai Wei, deputy head of the Three Gorges Power Plant.

As of early October this year, the cumulative power generation of the Three Gorges Power Plant had reached 1.66 trillion kWh, equivalent to saving 528 million metric tons of standard coal and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 1.43 billion tons, Cai added.

The Three Gorges Reservoir, with its large volume of water and excellent water distribution capability, has evolved into a critical strategic water regulator, said Xu.

The reservoir has replenished more than 360 billion cubic meters of water to meet the demand for water use in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River for a cumulative 2,686 dry season days.

The shipping capacity of the Yangtze River has also been significantly enhanced, with the joint operation of the ship lock and the ship lift of the Three Gorges, enabling water traffic to pass smoothly.

The five-tier ship lock allows vessels of up to 15,264 metric tons to navigate past the dam, and the ship lift enables vessels of up to 3,000 tons to pass in about 40 minutes, according to its operator.

As of early October, the ship lock has opened its gates 207,000 times



Ships pass the five-tier ship lock of the Three Gorges Project in October. WANG GANG / XINHUA

since its inauguration in 2003, facilitating the passage of 1.05 million vessels and a cargo volume exceeding 2.12 billion tons, according to Cheng Hang, deputy director of the Three Gorges Group's hub operation and management center

for the Yangtze River Basin. As of early October, the ship lift has transported 29,000 vessels, and carried 1.39 million passengers and 18.11 million tons of goods since its inauguration in September 2016, according to Cheng.

# VISUAL



**Editor's Note:** Using a blend of words and visuals, this series explores unique communities and reveals the heart of China through food, architecture, craftsmanship, landscapes and traditions.

## BEHIND THE RAPESEED OIL

# REVISITING AN OLD SQUEEZE

Ancient oil press that brought business success in 'land of fish and rice'. **Zhu Lixin** and **Li Xinlei** report in Anhui.

Rapeseed bears four-petaled yellow flowers in spikes. Each elongated round pod has a short beak and contains many seeds.

Rapeseed oil is known for its high content of unsaturated fatty acids, especially polyunsaturated fatty acids.

**8 HAMMERING**  
The hammer weighs about 200 kilograms. It is carefully swung to hammer the wooden tools.

Once hammered, the racks are squeezed to the left side of the machine. The entire process from cleaning the seeds to making oil takes 4 to 6 hours

The oil is collected in a steel container

This tool is used to align the stacked rapeseed paste racks

Two tools used in the process of hammering are for tightening and loosening the wooden planks placed in the machine.

**1 CLEANING**  
The first step in the process is to clean the seeds. Seeds are poured into the machine and dust and other particles are filtered out

**2 BAKING**  
The seeds are poured into a large container. The baking takes from 40 minutes to 2 hours

**3 POWDERING**  
The baked seeds are powdered in a mill and stored

In the Wuhu Museum in Anhui province, there is an old and large wooden device for producing edible oil that originated in the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

The device represents an important aspect of local people's culinary culture, according to Chen Lin, the museum's deputy director.

Wuhu, located on the banks of the Yangtze River, was one of the earliest inland ports to open to foreign trade in the late Qing Dynasty.

"Merchants from all over the country and abroad gathered here, bringing with them a fusion of culinary cultures, which led to the creation of many delicacies and a high demand for cooking oil," Chen said.

The oil needed to make these delicacies was produced using a wood-pressing technique that has a history of over 1,600 years, Chen explained, pointing to the old device. The oil press, approximately 5 meters long, 2 meters wide, 1.5 meters high and weighing about 2 metric tons, was donated by Yiranxiang, a company in the city's Wanzhi district. The company still has dozens of such ancient oil presses that continue to produce oil every day, mainly with rapeseed.

In the company's workshop, the workers start as early as 5 am — a tradition for generations.

The entire process takes four to six hours and involves several steps, including seed roasting, grinding, steaming, cake wrapping, loading the press, pressing and settling.

Each step relies on skilled craftsmanship, primarily acquired through hands-on practice, according to Xu Zuowen, founder and chairman of the enterprise.

"In the past, oil pressing workshops were usually located near markets. By the time the markets were filled with shoppers, the aroma of freshly produced rapeseed oil had already wafted through every corner," Xu said.

In the late Qing Dynasty, Xu's grandfather worked in an oil workshop and passed the skills to his grandfather. The family's business was then interrupted for many years by wars and social unrest.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Xu's father resumed the family business.

Xu grew up watching the adults make oil, developing a deep emotional connection to the craft. After years in the profitable construction business, he began collecting presses from across the country and founded Yiranxiang.

Wuhu has long been known as the "land of fish and rice" with a history of prosperous agriculture. Local farmers have extensively cultivated oil crops, providing favorable conditions for the development and preservation of the wooden oil pressing technique.

Rapeseed oil has always been the most important cooking oil for the locals. In terms of planting area and production, China is the world's largest producer of rapeseed, followed by countries such as Canada and India. In China, the Yangtze River Basin is the largest planting area.

In 2019, Xu was recognized as a representative inheritor of the Wuhu wood-pressed oil technique, a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage item, by the Anhui Department of Culture and Tourism.

Two years later, Yiranxiang was listed as a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage inheritance base.

Lyu Yi, an expert from the Wuhu intangible cultural heritage protection center, said, "We have conducted rescue documentation and organization of basic information on wood-pressed oil techniques, including physical objects, texts and images, and have also cultivated a team of inheritors."

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**7 LOADING**  
The rapeseed cakes are carefully arranged and placed inside the wooden press

**6 PRESSING**  
The cake is put through a compress before being taken to the larger press

**5 SHAPING**  
After the steaming process, the powder is spreaded to make it into a cake using four iron rings and cotton cloth

**4 STEAMING**  
Powdered rapeseeds are collected in wooden containers and steamed in a specially made apparatus. The powder is steamed for 5 minutes

Source: Wuhu Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center

GRAPHICS BY LI XINLEI & MUKESH MOHANAN / CHINA DAILY; ILLUSTRATIONS BY XU SHIRU / FOR CHINA DAILY

## WORLD

**Editor's note:** As the People's Republic of China celebrates the 75th anniversary of its founding this year, China Daily asked prominent international figures to reflect on their relationship with the country and to talk of the direction in which they see it going.

## CHINA LINK

# US professor sets out to fight anti-China rhetoric, challenge prevailing narratives

Academic calls for more exchanges to bridge gap between Washington and Beijing

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco  
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

In the complex landscape of US-China relations, where headlines often paint a picture of tension and mistrust, Professor Stephen Roddy stands as a refreshing voice of reason and cultural understanding.

His recent journey through China, a country he first visited more than four decades ago, provided him with a perspective that challenges the prevailing narrative and invites US citizens to see beyond the rhetoric.

Roddy is a professor of languages, literatures and cultures at the University of San Francisco, specializing in East Asian studies. He is also a chair professor at the Xueheng Institute for Advanced Studies at Nanjing University.

Roddy embarked on a tour of China in May at the invitation of Nanjing University, Henan Normal University and several others. He took high-speed rail lines across the country, from bustling cities to serene countryside, and visited classrooms filled with eager Chinese students.

As he traveled in Anhui, Jiangsu, Jiangxi and other provinces, Roddy saw a China that defied the gloomy portrayals often found in Western media. "I just couldn't believe all the solar panels everywhere," he told China Daily. "China is doing lots of great things to help alleviate, and hopefully, slow down global warming. There are just so many good things happening in China."

A fluent Chinese speaker, Roddy relished the opportunity to converse with locals during his travels. He was met with warmth and openness. "I never had anyone express any kind of hostility," he shared. "They knew I was American, and they were happy to meet me and talk to me. It was just so nice to have those interpersonal conversations."

Such exchanges, Roddy believes, are the key to bridging the gap between the two nations. "I just feel like there's so much good that can happen when people talk to one another and learn about one another," he said. "Chinese are very well informed about the US, so we need to learn more about China."

Roddy's first visit to China was in 1982 when the country was just beginning to open its doors to the world. He went back to Beijing as a graduate student in 1985 and spent a year studying at Peking University for his dissertation research. He started going back to China about 10 years ago and had "wonderful experiences".

Now, four decades later, he said the transformation he witnessed was nothing short of remarkable. "People's daily life has changed dramatically," Roddy observed. "People live very well now, and transportation is so easy."

It wasn't just the material improvements but the sense of safety and contentment among the Chinese people that made a lasting impression. "I think China today is very much appreciated by everyone. That was my impression that people are very happy that things are," he said.

What also interested Roddy was the Chinese people's candor about the problems they face. "Obviously, every country has its own issues, and people were very open about issues that China faces now," he noted. "They don't see the current age as perfect. They see that there are changes that could be made, and especially on the economy and other things."

**Openness, realism**  
That openness and realism, Roddy believes, is a "great attitude" and one of China's greatest strengths.

Roddy's interactions with Chinese people also shed light on China's ethnic diversity. In 2013, he returned to China for the first time since the 1980s. During that trip, he visited west Hunan, a region he had long wished to explore, and then formed a deep connection that continues to this day.

A chance encounter with Hunan native writer Peng Xueming led to Roddy translating Peng's best-selling memoir, which chronicles the life of the writer's mother, a member of the Miao ethnic group.

He spent a few years on the project, which became a gateway for him to delve into the rich cultural tapestry of the region.



Stephen Roddy, a professor of languages, literatures and cultures at the University of San Francisco, says he had the opportunity to talk to locals during his travels in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“China has always been very humble and always trying to find new ideas. Now it's time for us to do the same and look at what China has done in many areas.”

**Stephen Roddy,** professor of languages, literatures and cultures at the University of San Francisco

This interaction with the writer gave him an insight into the world of ethnic groups in China whom he hadn't really had that much contact with before. The area, he discovered, is home not only to the Miao but also to the Tujia ethnic group, renowned for their singing and step-dancing traditions.

Roddy's experience translating the book and his immersion in the cultures of west Hunan broadened his understanding of China's complex multicultural landscape.

Roddy expressed optimism about China's evolving "multiculturalism".

"China is indeed in the process, I

think, of really developing an interesting new kind of multiculturalism," he said, encouraging others to look beyond surface-level assessments and engage more deeply with China's diverse cultural realities.

Roddy's observation offers a counterpoint to the often negative portrayals in Western media of China's treatment of ethnic groups.

"I think Americans, who see so much about the Uyghurs in particular these days, should see the broader picture and how many of these local peoples are certainly not rebelling, and actually benefiting from the economic strides that China has been making over the last 20 years," Roddy asserted.

Frustrated by what he sees as misinformation, Roddy has taken an active role in combating the anti-China rhetoric. He is involved in a peace activist campaign called "China Is Not Our Enemy", organized by the anti-war organization CodePink, which aims to provide a more balanced view of the country.

Roddy participated in a recent petition organized by CodePink to demand PBS release a documentary film the company made years ago on China's poverty-relief efforts. The film, *Voices from the Frontline: China's War on Poverty*, was aired just once and then shelved by PBS under pressure from domestic politicians who criticized the film for "making China look too good".

He pointed to the US "weapons industry", which is "profiting enormously from all of their money that's going into these weapons that are supposedly preventing China from taking us over". "But that's essentially an absurd idea," he said.

And that is why the US people need to see the PBS documentary, which documented China's efforts to lift 800 million people out of poverty in the past four decades, said Roddy. "There is so much propaganda (in the US). They just keep turning up the volume, and it's so wrong-headed. It's just so utterly false," said Roddy. "The more that people can learn about the real China, the less they will be influenced by this propaganda that's coming out of multiple sources, but mostly, I think it's coming out of the weapons industry."

In the last 10 years, Roddy has been writing about eco-criticism, or environmental literature, an area where he sees great potential for collaboration between the United States and China.

"We had a lot of conversations about how the world can work together to do things about the current ecological crisis that we're facing," Roddy said.

## Concerns voiced

However, he expressed concerns about the US' increasing restrictions on research collaboration with the Chinese side.

"My main complaint is that there aren't enough exchanges, and there needs to be a lot more," he stressed.

Roddy said many in the scientific community fear that severing the research connections will have dire consequences for US science and technology.

"China has always been very humble and always trying to find new ideas. Now it's time for us to do the same and look at what China has done in many areas, including in the humanities," he said.

Roddy remains optimistic about the future of US-China relations. He finds hope in the rationality and open-mindedness of the Chinese people he's encountered.

"They're much more in tune and well informed about what's going on here than many Americans," he said.

## Syrian forces regain key areas, halt rebel advance

DAMASCUS — Syrian government forces launched a counteroffensive in the northern countryside of Hama Province in central Syria, reclaiming key areas from rebel groups after days of intense clashes, state media and a war monitor reported on Sunday.

Units of the Syrian army reinforced their defensive lines overnight with additional firepower, personnel, and equipment, repelling attacks by terrorist organizations and preventing any breaches, the Syrian Defense Ministry said in a statement. "Our armed forces managed to secure several areas after expelling the terrorists, most notably Qalaat al-Madiq and Maardas, killing dozens of them while the rest fled," the ministry said.

State-run Syrian television reported that approximately 1,000 militants from the militant group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, and affiliated groups were killed over the past three days during the army's operations.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, confirmed that government forces have dispatched significant reinforcements in recent hours.

Since the early hours of Sunday, warplanes have conducted a series of airstrikes targeting areas around Mork, Khan Sheikhoun, Kafr Nabl, Hazarin, and Tal Kokba in the northwestern province of Idlib and northern Hama areas recently seized by the HTS. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

According to the observatory, the intensive airstrikes have halted the advance of rebel factions in the Hama countryside.

The HTS and allied opposition factions on Saturday advanced in Hama and took control of numerous towns and villages in the northern part of the province.

The HTS seized the Aleppo International Airport on Saturday, according to the observatory.

In his first public comments since the offensive, released by the state news agency on Saturday evening, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said Syria will continue to "defend its stability and territorial integrity against terrorists and their supporters".

Iran's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday he will leave Tehran for Damascus to deliver a message of support for Syria's government and armed forces, state media said.

The Syrian Defense Ministry said in a statement on Saturday evening: "We confirm that units of our armed forces are stationed at their positions in the northern and eastern countryside of Hama province and are fully prepared to repel any potential terrorist attack."

## Support extended

In phone talks with al-Assad on Saturday, President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani voiced support for Damascus.

The UAE president said the country "stands with the Syrian state and supports it in combating terrorism, extending its sovereignty, unifying its territories, and achieving stability," Syria's state news agency SANA reported.

Al-Sudani said "Syria's security and stability are closely linked to Iraq's national security," and play a crucial role in regional security and efforts to establish stability in the Middle East, said a statement issued by the Iraqi prime minister's media office.

In their phone call on Saturday, Araghchi and his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, expressed "decisive" support for Syria's national sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the Arab state's government and army in their fight against "terrorist groups".

Russia's Defense Ministry said its air force had carried out strikes on Syrian rebels in support of the country's army, Russian news agencies reported.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty also expressed concerns over the escalation of tensions in a phone call with his Syrian counterpart, Bassam Sabbagh.

On Wednesday, a major rebel offensive rocked the western countryside of Aleppo, the first significant attack since 2016. The assault was carried out by a coalition of rebel groups, mainly the HTS, with the aim of penetrating government-held territories.

XINHUA — AGENCIES

## Chinese EVs boost green transformation in Kenya

By EDITH MUTETHYA  
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On a bustling Monday morning, Patrick Opiyo drives his electric taxi, fulfilling ride-hailing orders in the busy streets of Nairobi, Kenya. Thanks to the car's quiet operation, his passengers are able to relax or even work without distractions in his new car.

Like most drivers in Kenya, previously Opiyo had been driving a fossil-fuel taxi. However, soaring petrol prices in Kenya pushed him to consider an EV. And when he learned that Moja EV Kenya, the distributor of the Chinese electric vehicle brand Neta, would launch electric taxis in Nairobi in October, he did not hesitate to switch to a new electric vehicle.

In late October, the first 30 Neta EVs were launched in Nairobi, and by the end of the year, a total of 100 EV taxis will be added to the city's taxi fleet, according to Wang Aiping, chief executive officer of Moja EV Kenya, adding the measure will contribute to reducing air pollution from the exhaust from conventional fossil fuel cars in Nairobi and boost the green transformation of the country's transport.

In November, petrol prices in Kenya reached \$1.39 per liter, significantly higher than the global average of \$1.16, according to Kenya's Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority.

Wycliffe Manderu, another taxi driver in Nairobi who turned to a Neta EV, highlighted the cost advantage: for a daily driving of about 200 kilometers, fueling a petrol car may cost \$29, while charging an electric car requires only \$6.

Initially skeptical about EV technology, Manderu said, "Once I got one, the savings were undeniable."

Opiyo often visits a free charging station to power up his taxi. In Nairobi, there are two such stations, installed by Kenya Power in April, available for the moment. These facilities provide free charging services to the public, supporting sustainable transportation solutions in the city. There are also some charging stations for electric vehicles that require drivers to pay in the city.

"I consider myself a green enthusiast," Opiyo said. "It brings me great joy to see more entities in this country going green, and I'm proud that my vehicle is contributing to this goal."

According to statistics from Moja EV, Kenya's taxi market is predominantly made up of second-hand fossil fuel-powered vehicles, each emitting approximately 20 kilograms of carbon dioxide per 100 kilometers. On average, a single fossil fuel taxi contributes an estimated 15 metric tons of carbon emissions annually. Older diesel vehicles also worsen air quality by releasing toxic pollutants such as carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides.

In contrast, the majority of Kenya's electricity comes from renewable sources, including hydropower, geothermal, wind, and solar energy.

"Replacing fuel-powered cars with EVs will systematically upgrade the country's green transport operations," said Wang.

China's EV industry has flourished over the past decade, accumulating technical expertise and production experience. Wang noted that representatives from Kenya's Maturu Owners' Association and Kenya Commercial Bank traveled to China in November to explore the electric bus market as part of efforts to advance the green transformation of Kenya's public transport system.

Moreover, Moja EV plans to add 500 electric taxis next year and is preparing to establish an assembly plant in Kenya. The plant is expected to create around 3,500 direct and indirect jobs while eliminating tariffs on electric vehicles, further promoting their adoption across the country.

Kenya's long-term strategy for greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets net zero by 2050. This goal is also supported by some other Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers, such as BYD, whose electric buses running in Nairobi were introduced by BasiGo, an African electric mobility company.

Zhang Mingxiao contributed to this story.



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## Raising awareness



Volunteers light candles arranged in the shape of a ribbon during an awareness event organized on the eve of World AIDS Day in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Saturday. It is a global movement to unite people in the fight against HIV and AIDS. PRAKASH MATHEMA / AFP

## WORLD

## SE. Asia eyes low-carbon development

Experts highlight potential, challenges in balancing growth and green goals

By PRIME SARMIENTO  
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Southeast Asian countries are working on energy transition to boost economic growth while reducing carbon emissions, but most are still in the early stages of such a transition, analysts say.

"We can see that most ASEAN countries have a plan to reach net-zero emission (in the next 30 to 40 years) ... they have a clear target to reach carbon neutrality," said Fabby Tumiwa, executive director of the Institute for Essential Services Reform in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations want to boost their economies but with "less intensive carbon emissions", which is why they plan to develop more renewable energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and gradually phase out coal plants, Tumiwa said.

However, the progress of renewable energy production across Southeast Asia is uneven, he added.

While Vietnam has significantly increased renewable energy, countries such as Indonesia are still in the process of moving in that direction, he said. "This is something that should be done by every country, by being ambitious with the energy transition."

Aditya Lolla, the Asia program director at Ember, an energy think tank in London, said most ASEAN countries are still in the early stages of energy transition and this is supported by the rise of cheaper clean energy technology.

However, uncertainty over policy and regulations may keep businesses from investing in the bloc's renewable energy sector, Lolla said.

"Clean energy needs a market, (which) gives certainty to investors to come and invest into new projects and to develop them. You have to send the right market signals through policy and regulation."

ASEAN countries are "demand powerhouses" as their fast-growing economies also demand more electricity and power generation, he added.

The bloc also has to respond to three challenges: How to achieve energy security, how to keep power rates affordable for citizens, and how to ensure enough supply to meet the demand, he said.

"I think the entire world's eyes are on ASEAN and how ASEAN will actually manage transition. ASEAN has to meet the growing demand and meet it with a new ... clean form of energy. So it's not an easy task," Lolla said.

ASEAN countries have committed to reducing their emissions as signatories to the Paris climate pact.

The bloc is establishing an ASEAN Centre for Climate Change in Brunei to facilitate cooperation and coordination on climate change initiatives among its members.

In a joint statement issued on Oct 9 at the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits held in Laos, ASEAN "re-emphasized" measures to address and facilitate a just transition, including collaboration in developing low-emission technologies and facilitating cross-border flows of clean and renewable energy.

At last year's summit in Indonesia, ASEAN leaders committed to achieving a 23 percent renewable energy share in the bloc's energy mix, with clean energy accounting for 35 percent in installed power capacity by next year, under the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation.

However, studies show that ASEAN is still lagging behind its energy transition target.

Between 2015 and 2022, ASEAN recorded a 43 percent average annual growth in solar and wind generation, according to a report published last year by Ember.

Combined solar and wind generation grew from 4.2 terawatt hours to 50 TWh between 2015 and 2022, which accounted for 14 percent of the total electricity demand growth seen in the same period.

## Key driver

Vietnam, which introduced a feed-in tariff policy in 2017, was the key driver behind this growth and it alone contributed 69 percent of the total solar and wind generation in the region in 2022, Ember said.

However, the International Energy Agency estimates that for the ASEAN region to be on track for the 2050 net-zero emission scenario, solar and wind need to account for 23 percent of total electricity generation. Ember said ASEAN needs an additional 164 gigawatts of solar capacity and 65 GW of wind capacity by 2030 to meet the IEA target.

Putra Adhiguna, the Jakarta-based managing director of the Energy Shift Institute, an independent think tank, said Southeast Asian countries need to show that they can build an integrated power grid within the region and how this can accelerate energy transition in the region.

An integrated regional power grid is the future for ASEAN's energy transition, allowing member countries to harness indigenous clean energy sources and generate electricity through a regional power grid, he said.

ASEAN has no existing regional power grid but there exists bilateral cooperation among its members, such as the Singapore-Indonesia solar power export deal.



Naji Zein, a 72-year-old Lebanese who fled his home during the conflict, reads a verse from the Quran as he visits his home in Beirut's southern suburb of Haret Hreik on Saturday. AFP

## Israel hits Hezbollah targets in Lebanon

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military carried out airstrikes in Lebanon on Saturday against Hezbollah activities that it said "posed a threat", days into a fragile cease-fire between it and the armed group.

The army said it had also struck "military infrastructure" on the Syria-Lebanon border, where it accused Hezbollah of smuggling weapons in violation of the truce.

In a speech last week announcing his government was ready to accept a cease-fire after more than a year of hostilities with Hezbollah, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Israel would maintain "full military freedom of action" in the event of any breach.

In a statement on Saturday, the military listed four separate strikes in Lebanon on facilities, weapons and vehicles belonging to Hezbollah, saying it had acted "against activities in Lebanon that posed a threat to the State of Israel, violating the cease-fire understandings".

Lebanon's Health Ministry said an Israeli "strike on a car in Majdal Zoun wounded three people including a seven-year-old child".

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported "continued violations of the cease-fire" by Israel, including an incident in which an Israeli tank "crushed a number of cars and surrounded some families" who were later evacuated by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The cease-fire deal, which was intended to end more than a year of cross-border exchanges of fire and two months of intensive battles, went into effect early on Wednesday.

As part of the terms of the agreement, the Lebanese army and United Nations peacekeepers will deploy in southern Lebanon as the Israeli army withdraws over a period of 60 days.

Hezbollah is also expected to withdraw its forces north of the Litani River, about 30 kilometers from the border, and dismantle its military infrastructure in southern Lebanon.

On Friday, the group's chief Naim Qassem vowed to cooperate with the Lebanese army "to implement the commitments of the agreement".

Israel stepped up its campaign in

southern Lebanon in late September after nearly a year of cross-border exchanges of fire, in which Hezbollah said it was acting in solidarity with Palestinian allies in Gaza.

Meanwhile, as representatives arrived in Cairo on Saturday for talks on a possible cease-fire in Gaza, a senior Hamas official told AFP that the group is open to discussing "all ideas and proposals".

Hamas has "not received any new offer or proposal so far", the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the topic.

But Hamas "is open to discussing all ideas and proposals that lead to the end of the war, Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the return of the displaced, the entry of humanitarian and relief aid, and a serious deal to exchange prisoners", he said.

On Sunday, Israeli military strikes

killed at least 15 Palestinians, including children, medics said, as Israeli forces kept up bombardments across the enclave and blew up houses on its northern edge.

Israeli airstrikes killed at least 54 people, including a journalist and a civil defense officer, in Gaza on Saturday, according to Palestinian sources.

In northern Gaza, at least 40 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike on the home of the Al-Araf family, which was sheltering displaced people in the Tal al-Zaatar area of Beit Lahia, the civil defense said in a statement.

The head of the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency, Philippe Lazzarini, said on Sunday that aid delivery through the Kerem Shalom crossing between Israel and Gaza has been halted for safety reasons.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

## Trump taps Kash Patel to head FBI

WASHINGTON — US President-elect Donald Trump aims to make loyalist Kash Patel the next director of the FBI, he said on Saturday, in a move that would mean replacing the agency's current leader.

Trump announced the former adviser and Pentagon official, who has been critical of the bureau and is known for his views on a so-called government "deep state", as his choice for the post on his Truth Social network.

The FBI's current director, Christopher Wray, was appointed to a 10-year term in 2017, meaning he would either need to step down or be fired.

"Kash is a brilliant lawyer, investigator and 'America First' fighter who has spent his career exposing corruption, defending Justice, and protecting the American People," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

A son of Indian immigrants, Patel served in several high-level posts during Trump's first term, including as a national security adviser and as chief of staff to the acting defense secretary.

Also on Saturday, Trump said he intends to nominate real estate developer Charles Kushner, father of his son-in-law Jared Kushner, to serve as ambassador to France.

Charles Kushner is "a tremendous business leader, philanthropist, & dealmaker", Trump said on Truth Social.

Charles Kushner is a multimillionaire real estate executive and former attorney; his son is a former White House senior adviser to Trump who is married to Trump's eldest daughter, Ivanka.

Separately, Trump nominated Chad Christner, a Florida sheriff, as administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Envoy calls for strengthening bilateral ties

By CHANG JUN in San Francisco  
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China's top diplomat in San Francisco and his new deputy colleague said they remain upbeat about subnational relationship-building between China and Northern California and urged people from various sectors to help strengthen the friendship.

Zhang Jianmin, consul general of China's Consulate General in the city, spoke at a reception on Wednesday about the "unchanged position, stance and commitment" in a turbulent, changing world.

Zhang also introduced Yang Shouzheng, the deputy consul general who arrived in October to report to his new post for his first foreign service in the United States.

"Geographically, the United States and China are far away. In many ways, however, San Francisco makes me feel close," said Yang, adding that the Chinese cuisine, the large Chinese American community, and the Golden Gate Bridge remind him of what China and the US have in common.

The long-term trend of China's economic growth will remain unchanged, said Zhang, adding that the government has announced that China will deepen its reform and advance the nation's modernization with 300 major reform-related initiatives being introduced for completion within the next five years.

"China's economy is on track for steady recovery, reinforcing its position as a key engine of global economic growth," he said, noting that the number of vendors at this year's China International Import Expo in Shanghai surpassed last year's total.

"The US companies, once again, rent first in terms of the size of their exhibition areas. That fully demonstrates the world's confidence in China's economic prospects," the consul general said.

He also said that China's position on growing its relationship with the United States remains unchanged.

The summit between the nations' two leaders in November 2023 in San Francisco and this November in Lima, Peru, charted a new course for the

future of bilateral relations, Zhang said.

"The two countries are better to be partners instead of rivals," he said, adding that "both sides will benefit when we cooperate".

He said that the two economies are deeply intertwined, with more than 70,000 American companies investing and operating in China. "Made-in-China products provide US consumers more choices and lower cost," he said.

Moreover, China's commitment to deepen people-to-people friendships with the United States remains unchanged, Zhang said.

Thanks to the launch of the China-US Youth Exchanges, many American students are able to visit China and gain firsthand experiences there.

"Many of them shoot videos that capture a real and vibrant China," said Zhang, adding that San Francisco, for example, has established sister-city type relations with Guangzhou and Shenzhen. "Bay Area residents are eagerly awaiting the arrival of a pair of giant pandas to the San Francisco Zoo."



## BUSINESS

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## Global firms mark up expectations of China

High-end brands that debuted at previous expos enter market

By CHENG YU  
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Across the world, introducing a brand-new product to the market was once an undoubtedly monumental task.

However, at the China International Import Expo, a major international event held in Shanghai in November each year, the brand growth cycle that used to be measured in years has been fast-tracked into just days.

The trend, experts said, demonstrates the growing confidence of multinational companies in how the expo has evolved over the years into a global platform for foreign trade.

It also shows the high expectations of MNCs that the larger Chinese market will also benefit from the spillover effect to amplify their market presence in China and beyond.

For Japanese cosmetics giant Shiseido, the huge spillover effect allows the company to witness how its exhibits turn into commodities and then into bestsellers in the Chinese market, said Toshinobu Umetsu, president and CEO of Shiseido China.

Shiseido debuted many high-end brands including The Ginza, Baum and Effectim at previous CIIEs and these brands were able to quickly enter the China market.

Thanks to the enduring impact of the expo, The Ginza also opened its first exclusive shop in Beijing and a boutique in Shanghai. Both are the first of their kind outside of Japan and duty-free channels.

Umetsu said: "China today is leading the way in the application of innovative technologies, and understanding the latest innovation trends in China is key to capturing future growth opportunities."

Shiseido, which came to China during the early period of the country's reform and opening-up as the first foreign beauty group to enter the Chinese mainland, has been present in the country for over four decades.

"We have never wavered in our confidence and determination to invest in China and will continue to strengthen our long-term investment in the country to provide all the support needed to drive further innovation, growth, and best practices," he added.

Compared to customers in other markets, Chinese consumers are more conscious of their beauty needs and are willing to accept new products, which assures Shiseido of its investments in the market, he added.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang pledged at this year's CIIE to further expand opening-up and turn China's vast market into great opportunities for the world.

If the first CIIE was a one-way invitation from China to the world, then each subsequent edition has become a mutual commitment between China and the world, reflecting the shared aspiration for opening-up and cooperation, the premier said.

Li stressed the need to strengthen consensus on opening-up, adding that all parties should jointly adhere to international economic and trade orders as well as rules. They must also earnestly fulfill multilateral and bilateral economic and trade agreements, he added.

China will further expand institutional opening-up and actively align with high-standard international



Delegates watch and take photos of a dancing humanoid robot during the seventh China International Import Expo in Shanghai on Nov 6. ZHANG CHENG / XINHUA



Visitors experience an immersive VR game at Qualcomm's exhibition area during the seventh CIIE in Shanghai on Nov 8. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



Participants check out an electric vertical take-off and landing flight control system during the seventh CIIE in Shanghai on Nov 6. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

economic and trade rules, Li said, pledging efforts to implement a strategy for upgrading pilot free trade zones.

Li said the country is willing to open up its enormous market further, including implementing its unilateral opening-up policy and offering zero-tariff treatment for all tariff lines from least developed countries, and effectively turn the huge market into great global opportunities.

The expo's transformative potential has not been lost on German software and cloud giant SAP, which is doubling down on its presence in China.

Michael Locher-Tjoa, SAP's global vice-president and chief business officer for Greater China, said China is one of the "key markets" for SAP, and definitely an important place for the company to strengthen its presence and grow further.

"Many of our multinational cus-

tomers are doing business in China and a significant number of them in large scale. It reflects what they expect that the growth from the market would be huge," he said.

According to the senior executive, China has been moving fast in many emerging sectors like new energy over the years and has witnessed rising engineering capabilities from various sectors.

"As multinationals further invest and grow their business here, SAP will help them grow and have a more sustainable business going forward," he added.

Zhang Yansheng, chief researcher at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said: "The fact that the CIIE is organized every year demonstrates that China honors its commitment to high-level opening-up and is sharing its development dividends with others to shore up globalization.

"The world is in urgent need of more trade orders and increased demand to revive the staggering economic recovery, as well as communication to reach consensus and repair global industrial and supply chains."

Against the backdrop of a global economic slowdown, Pablo Machado, global executive vice-president at Suzano, said the company looks at the Chinese market from a "long-term perspective" and has great confidence about growth in the Chinese market.

"The year 2025 will again be a year of growth for Suzano here. We have seen a clear plan from the Chinese government in adjusting its development model, which focuses more on high quality rather than only high speed," said Machado, who is also president of business management at Suzano Asia.

According to him, the company's pulp business grew 6.6 percent year-

on-year last year in the Chinese market thanks to the country's economic growth and is already its largest pulp export destination, which accounted for over 40 percent of its exports.

"In line with the Chinese government's initiatives to cultivate new quality productive forces, particularly to improve the promotion of strategic industries such as new-generation information technology, artificial intelligence, new energy, new materials and biomedicine, Suzano will enhance our scale and competitiveness to meet the growing market demand here," he said.

Compared with traditional productive tools that are driven by elements like labor, land and capital, new quality productive forces refer to technological innovation, data, smart or intelligent technologies and the like that are free from traditional economic growth models, promise high efficiency and top quality, and are in line

with the nation's new development philosophy for a strategic future.

China has made developing new quality productive forces into a top agenda.

In order to remove obstacles and difficulties in the development of new quality productive forces, the country is also speeding up the process of deepening reform of its economic structure and building a high-level socialist market economy system, with a key focus on fields including a high-standard market system.

According to Machado, China has launched many initiatives in recent years, including the further opening-up policy and some economic stimulus policies, which are the right directions to overcome rising economic challenges. "With such continued efforts, confidence will be fully restored," he said.

"Our vision for the future is clear; we remain committed to further strengthening our partnerships with local stakeholders, especially within the sustainability and innovation ecosystem, to accelerate China's shift toward a low-carbon economy," he added.

Despite subdued global investment sentiment, multinational companies are confident about investing in China and firmly believe innovations can represent the most significant growth opportunities for them in the Chinese market, said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

"The stable development of the Chinese market is not only to achieve the country's own development goals, but can also create more value for the international community," Zhou said.

## CIIE's 186 'All-Time Attendees'

REPORTER'S LOG  
By Cheng Yu

On the buzzing floor of the China International Import Expo last month, surrounded by cutting-edge tech displays, dazzling product showcases and eager conversations, I found myself drawn to a special yet inspiring group of

exhibitors — the "CIIE All-Time Attendees".

These are the companies and organizations that have graced every single edition of the expo since it debuted in 2018. All 186 of them, to be exact.

What makes them special is more than their commitment, it's their stories — stories of dreams tested, risks taken and rewards reaped. These are the loyalists of the CIIE, the ones who saw its potential from the beginning and have ridden its wave of opportunity ever since in the Chinese market. Take doTERRA, a US-based essen-

tial oils company, for instance. The company showed up at the first CIIE with cautious optimism, testing the waters of the Chinese market in 2018. At that time, it left with 380 million yuan (\$52.5 million) in orders, but several years later, that number has skyrocketed to 1 billion yuan.

Owen Messick, president of doTERRA China, said that compared to its first CIIE, the company's booth and products have grown over 30 times, gesturing proudly at its sprawling 300-square-meter display. The company was debuting a new

essential oil set made with ginseng and mugwort sourced from China — a nod to its growing connection to the local market.

Its story is a testament to the transformative power of the CIIE. For startups and multinational giants alike, it's not just an expo, but a springboard for growth.

Walking further into the exhibition hall, I spotted the familiar blue-and-white logo of Zeiss, the German optics company that has been part of the CIIE family for seven years.

Maximilian Foerst, president and CEO of Zeiss Greater China, said: "Every CIIE feels like more than just an expo for us. It's like an appointment with the future — a

chance to share and grow."

Zeiss has been in China for 67 years, but Foerst insists the past seven years, with the CIIE as a catalyst, have been some of the most dynamic. Its booth was bustling with activity, a mix of visitors marveling at its latest optical technologies and engaging in deep discussions about innovation.

As I moved between the booths, the sense of growth and optimism was palpable. From General Motors showcasing the company's latest electric vehicles to Qualcomm unveiling groundbreaking 5G innovations, CIIE's "All-Time Attendees" represent the vanguard of global cooperation and market adaptability.

But the most inspiring stories often come from humble beginnings. I couldn't stop thinking about the startups — the ones who arrived at the first CIIE relatively unknown, their futures uncertain.

Seven years later, many of them have grown into powerhouses in their respective industries. Their success isn't just about sales figures; it's about resilience and the ability to seize opportunities in a rapidly changing market.

One entrepreneur shared with me how the company's small-scale operation had transformed thanks to the expo. "We came here hoping for exposure," he said, "and we left with partnerships that changed everything."

## BUSINESSINSIGHT

## Fintech ecosystem can benefit from innovation

EAGLE EYE

By Zhang Ming

Fintech, as a major task of China's future economic development, aims to establish a virtuous cycle among technology, industry, and finance while driving innovation-led productivity and advancing the country's technological self-reliance.

The growth of endogenous technological innovation is both a prerequisite for sustained technological progress and a foundation for robust long-term economic growth in China.

However, tech-driven enterprises often face challenges in securing financing due to their high-risk, high-reward, and asset-light nature. Traditional financial institutions, such as commercial banks, struggle with issues like asset valuation, credit history, and lack of collateral.

Currently, China's fintech ecosystem is grappling with shortcomings, including an underdeveloped equity market, lagging high-yield bond market, limited integration between banks and venture capital, slow progress in intellectual property financing, and the need for ecosystem enhancements.

The declining contribution of technological innovation to China's economic growth is partly linked to the diminishing latecomer advantage of external technological progress.

Over the past four decades of reform and opening-up, domestic innovation has played a critical role in technological advancement, but the importance of exogenous technological progress cannot be overlooked.

Specifically, China has long benefited from importing, absorbing, and adapting foreign technologies for local application. However, since the global financial crisis in 2008, the pace of external technological progress in China has slowed significantly.

One reason for this slowdown is that as domestic technological progress accelerates, the gap between China and the world's leading technologies has narrowed. This makes the acquisition of cutting-edge international technology more expensive and less accessible.

Another reason is the increasing wariness of major developed countries toward China's rise, which has led to intensified efforts to impose technology blockades and restrictions.

In the foreseeable future, the scope for external technological progress will become increasingly constrained, making it imperative for the Chinese government to effectively stimulate domestic innovation.

The growth of endogenous technological innovation is not only essential for sustaining China's technological advancement, but also critical for ensuring the country's continued robust economic growth.

The process of technological innovation can be broken down into three stages: invention, innovation, and the diffusion of innovation. To transfer from invention to innovation and then to the diffusion of



CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

innovation, enterprises must overcome two "valleys of death". Successfully navigating these stages requires strong support from government policies and financial systems.

Developed countries have created comprehensive equity financing systems tailored to the life cycles of tech-driven enterprises, offering diversified and relay-style financial services.

Additionally, tech companies in these markets can raise funds through bond issuances. In the United States, a collaborative "investment-loan linkage" model involving commercial banks and VC and PE funds has been developed to jointly fintech enterprises.

In China, fintech development still faces several significant challenges. First, the broad equity market encounters a range of interconnected issues. The long-term returns of the stock market are notably lower than those of developed countries, and policies related to the stock market are heavily administrative, leading to difficulties in equity investment exits in the primary market.

Moreover, the scale of China's VC and PE markets has significantly shrunk compared to their peak, with foreign participation markedly declining.

According to market consultancy Zero2IPO Group, in the first three quarters of 2023, most large RMB-denominated funds were initiated by State-backed managers. All funds exceeding 10 billion yuan (\$1.38 billion) had State-owned backgrounds, while 87 percent of funds with a 5 to 10 billion yuan range also had such ties.

State-led equity investment funds, primarily established by local governments, play a key role but often emphasize short-term returns, resulting in a more conservative investment style compared to private funds.

To ensure successful investments, local governments frequently offer additional support in areas like market access, environmental regulations and land use, effectively reducing investment risks but potentially undermining the local business environment.

Additionally, many VC and PE funds in China lack sufficient specialization. Strong

fund performance depends on expertise, particularly in specific industries requiring long-term, in-depth research.

Second, the development of China's high-yield bond market lags behind other segments of its bond market. Although China has become one of the largest bond markets globally, the high-yield segment is still in its infancy.

Third, Chinese commercial banks have limited involvement and effectiveness in investment-loan linkage programs targeting tech enterprises. While some commercial banks have experimented with such programs, they are typically confined to collaborations between their credit and equity investment divisions or subsidiaries, rather than forming regular partnerships with external VC and PE funds.

Fourth, China's intellectual property market remains underdeveloped, with significant deficiencies in IP valuation, standardization, and liquidity, which hinder the expansion of IP-based financing.

Finally, China has yet to establish a well-integrated fintech ecosystem that fosters

close collaboration among governments, universities, enterprises, VC/PE funds, and capital markets.

To tackle these challenges, accelerating market-oriented and rule-of-law reforms in China's stock market is crucial. Efforts should focus on attracting long-term capital, such as pension funds, to increase the proportion of patient capital in the stock market.

China should enhance the accessibility of its VC and PE markets for foreign investors while fostering professionalism and market-oriented growth among domestic funds. For government-backed equity investment funds, the emphasis should shift from short-term profitability to long-term outcomes. Addressing challenges in tax incentives, talent policies, entry restrictions, and exit mechanisms will further optimize the investment environment.

Commercial banks should collaborate with VC and PE funds to create a "technology banking" model tailored to the Chinese market. This model would foster close cooperation and information sharing among banks, funds, and tech enterprises, reducing information asymmetry and associated risks.

Establishing national and regional IP markets, supported by third-party institutions, is key to improving IP valuation, standardization, and liquidity. Innovations in IP financing include combining various IP assets as collateral, implementing multiparty financing models involving banks, governments, and guarantors, and developing asset securitization products based on IP-backed loans.

Strengthening cooperation among governments, universities, enterprises, financial institutions, and capital markets is essential. Promoting entrepreneurship and cultivating tech leaders will help foster innovation while inspiring younger researchers and students to pursue similar paths.

Policy banks can play a significant role in financing major national innovation platforms. Drawing from Germany's experience, policy banks could offer differentiated loans at lower-than-market rates, collaborate with commercial banks to improve efficiency, and invest in equity to bolster the capital base of tech companies.

A credit assurance system that combines central and local government efforts, guarantees, and insurance could mitigate risks. For example, creating a fintech risk compensation fund, streamlining the re-guarantee system, and establishing government-backed financing guarantees would enhance credit support. Germany's guarantee banks provide a model, offering loans to small and medium-sized enterprises with a shared risk mechanism involving commercial banks and government backing.

By addressing these key areas, China can strengthen its fintech infrastructure, fostering innovation and ensuring sustainable economic growth.

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## Classic Keynes-Hayek economic debate worth revisiting

MAIN STREET

By Xu Gao

The relationship between government and the market has long been a source of debate in economic theory. The divergent views of economists Friedrich Hayek and John Maynard Keynes have shaped much of this discourse.

Hayek firmly opposed government intervention in the market. He believed that even in times of economic crisis, if the government artificially creates demand, it will inevitably lead to the misallocation of resources, potentially sowing the seeds for new turmoil and crises.

Keynes believed that policymakers cannot afford to simply wait for the market to naturally converge toward equilibrium. By the time that hypothetical long-term recovery occurs, the immediate hardships faced by individuals and the broader economy would have already taken a devastating toll.

At the core of this debate lies their contrasting views on the market's ability to self-correct. Both Hayek and Keynes acknowledged the fundamental role of the market and agreed that it should not be replaced by government control. However, their assessments of the market's efficiency and occasional need for intervention diverged significantly.

The key to striking the right balance lies in carefully assessing the state of the market itself. If the market is functioning well, there may not be a need for government involve-

ment. However, if the market itself is plagued by significant problems, then the government must intervene.

The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in March 2023 has served as a sobering reminder of the critical role that governments must play in addressing market instabilities.

As fallout from the bank's failure led to a significant contraction in commercial bank lending and turmoil in the financial markets, the US Federal Reserve responded swiftly by significantly expanding its asset holdings — a move that was widely praised as a wise and necessary intervention.

This episode has reinforced the growing consensus among experts that when problems arise in the market, government intervention is essential to stabilize the situation and help the market weather the crisis.

However, in China, the approach to market rescue efforts has often been complicated by concerns over moral hazard. The dilemma of whether to prioritize addressing moral risks before providing market support has frequently hampered the government's ability to act decisively in times of crisis.

It's a matter of timing. Let's say if a child has already fallen into the water, it would be absurd to stand by and watch, simply to teach them a lesson. The priority should be to save the child first, and then consider how to prevent such incidents in the future.

The real estate market in China has faced a similar conundrum, where the discussions around moral hazard have often taken precedence over the immediate and pressing need to stabilize the sector. There is no doubt the market should be rescued first, allowing it to survive before delving into the

complexities of moral risk management.

As income inequality continues to rise around the world, governments should play a more active role in promoting common prosperity and ensuring social harmony and stability.

While a market economy is capable of achieving Pareto optimality — a concept related to efficiency — experts caution that this does not necessarily translate to an equitable distribution of income. A state of extreme income inequality can also be Pareto optimal. This means that the market, on its own, lacks the ability to rectify the problem of unequal income distribution.

The global trend of rising income inequality has been particularly evident in the US. Since the onset of globalization in the 1990s, the share of national income going to wages and salaries has diverged from the share going to corporate profits. While worker wages have declined, corporate profits have seen a significant rise.

The US has been a major beneficiary of globalization. This is because the country has been able to create value at no cost, in exchange for products and services from other countries. However, the US has failed to distribute the gains of globalization fairly within its own borders.

As a result, the wealthy in the US have captured the majority of the benefits from globalization, while ordinary workers have suffered the consequences, leading to a widening of the income gap and exacerbating social tensions.

The problem in the US is primarily an internal one. As a capitalist country, the US lacks the ability to effectively transfer resources between different socioeconomic classes. These are the consequences of

relying solely on the market.

In the future, as artificial intelligence-driven production becomes more prevalent, the government's role in regulating income distribution will become even more crucial. The market alone cannot be trusted to ensure that the fruits of technological progress are shared fairly.

From this perspective, nations can actively promote the formation of scale advantages in their domestic industries, which then drives a significant amount of intra-industry trade among developed countries.

China's success in the new energy vehicle industry serves as a prime example. Over the past three years, the country's NEV market share has skyrocketed from less than 5 percent to 45 percent of the global segment, accompanied by a surge in Chinese auto exports.

This remarkable transformation is closely linked to China's sustained policy support for the NEV sector, covering production, consumption and infrastructure development.

However, this success has been perceived as a "threat" by some other countries, leading the European Union to recently issue a 700-page report highlighting China's supportive policies, which the EU views as "market distortions".

The Chinese government's substantial asset holdings present an opportunity to actively distribute income and boost domestic demand.

Data from 2018 show that State-owned enterprises accounted for 52 percent of assets in the corporate sector, with an even higher proportion in the financial sector. This means that the returns generated by these government-held assets ultimately accrue to the government itself.

As China navigates the complex relationship between the market and the government, a one-size-fits-all approach based on Western economic dogma is not the solution. Instead, a nuanced, case-by-case analysis that considers China's specific economic structure and income distribution is more appropriate.

The appropriate relationship between the market and the government should be evaluated based on three key criteria — whether it promotes the development of productive forces, enhances comprehensive national strength, and improves the living standards of the people.

The relationship between the market and the government must align with China's current ownership structure and income distribution system.

The influence of market players is based on the premise of income, and the more income they have, the greater their market influence. If market players are unable to convert their income into effective demand, it will lead to a shortage of effective demand and other economic problems.

In this context, the government's approach to fiscal spending should differ from that of private entities. Rather than focusing primarily on microeconomic rates of return, the government's expenditures should prioritize social benefits.

The government's fiscal policy should be aimed at doing what the private sector is unwilling or unable to do, such as investing in infrastructure projects. At the current state of affairs, the authorities should play a more active role in these areas to provide solid support for China's sustainable economic development, rather than completely withdrawing from the market.

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## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Building rural roads to eliminate global poverty and promote common development

For those keen to know how China has been able to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty in just a few decades, a white paper Beijing released on Friday highlights one specific, but crucial, aspect of how it was done.

The document titled "China's Rural Roads in the New Era" shares China's experience in this regard and outlines the achievements and vision of rural road development since 2012.

The country has put in place a rural road network in which county roads connect rural and urban areas, township roads link towns, and village roads facilitate travel between households and farmland. The total length of this rural road network was 4.6 million kilometers by the end of 2023, an increase of 21.7 percent over the total length in 2013, enough to circle the equator 115 times.

The fast expansion of the rural road network has provided strong support for the comprehensive development of the rural economy and society in China, as better transport has cleared bottlenecks that had long delayed economic and social development in poor areas.

The country is now in the planning process for making its huge rural road system smart, and its management, operation and maintenance efficient, effective and sustainable, so that it can continually contribute to improving people's well-being and rural development.

Poor transportation remains one of the bottlenecks for economic and social development in many developing countries. China's experience indicates that the input in village roads, if well managed, is by no means a burden on the government, but a worthwhile long-term investment that can help unleash the development potential of rural areas.

In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The resolution emphasizes the need to increase poverty reduction efforts through infrastructure construction, among other measures.

Unlike those empty talkers, who only pay lip service to their stated "commitments" to helping developing countries build infrastructure, China has always been a doer in this regard. It has been actively sharing its development experience and helping construct rural road infrastructure in other developing countries over the years.

China has accordingly exchanged and shared its development experiences with other countries through multiple international cooperation mechanisms, and assisted in the construction of rural road infrastructure in developing countries, making positive contributions to global rural roads and poverty reduction.

Since 2018, China has supported 24 developing countries including Cambodia, Serbia, Rwanda, Namibia, Vanuatu and Niger in highway and bridge construction and maintenance, helping them improve their transport infrastructure.

China has also taken the initiative to build new platforms and mechanisms for global transportation cooperation, and having established a system of standards for highway engineering, it has been applying these in hundreds of projects in dozens of countries around the world.

Unlike those countries which attach strings to their aid, China's assistance in the construction of infrastructure in developing countries is unconditional and focuses on delivering tangible benefits to local people.

As a pioneer of rural roads as a means to eliminate poverty, China upholds the concept of openness and win-win cooperation in the field of rural road infrastructure as a means to realize the United Nations' 2030 sustainable development agenda goal of eliminating global poverty. The country will therefore unswervingly strengthen exchanges and cooperation with other countries in the field of rural roads to help lift people out of poverty worldwide.

By continuing to contribute its wisdom and strength to the global rural roads and poverty reduction cause, the country is committed to jointly drawing a beautiful picture of a community with a shared future for mankind with like-minded countries.

## US should honor its stated commitment

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has once again had to remind the United States that if it wants to maintain peace in the Taiwan Strait, it is crucial for it to recognize the separatist nature of Lai Ching-te and the Democratic Progressive Party authorities and to exercise the "utmost caution" in its relations with them.

The reminder came as a result of Taiwan secessionist-minded leader Lai Ching-te's stopovers in Hawaii and Guam during his ongoing visit to three South Pacific "allies". These might be played down as harmless and insignificant, or played up as a great "diplomatic" breakthrough for the island's new leadership.

Those wanting them to be kept low-key may fear an escalation in tensions between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait; those wanting them to be more in one's face may want exactly that.

While Lai's stopovers on United States territories have already triggered a guessing game over the mainland's possible reaction, there is a general failure by both the down-players and the up-players to appreciate the real consequence of Lai's stopovers in the US territories.

As the Foreign Ministry's cautionary reminder indicates, however they are viewed, the practical outcome of Lai's stopovers is they will accumulate more distrust and subsequently more ill-feeling between Beijing and Lai's Democratic Progressive Party authorities in Taipei and between Beijing and Washington.

People in Washington may be too full of their own importance to listen to what Beijing has to say about China-US relations and its repeated reminders to tread carefully around the Taiwan question, which is China's internal affair.

Throughout their dealings with the previous and present US administrations, Chinese leaders have tried tirelessly to instill a due sense of how sensitive the Taiwan question is. Beijing has time and again stated to Washington that Taiwan sits at the core of core Chinese interests, and that it is the first and foremost red line for the bilateral relationship.

But for all their promises of commitment to the one-China principle, and to not support "Taiwan independence", Washington's policy circles have obviously found Taiwan a handy card to play in pressuring China as a supposedly strategic rival.

That is why they keep selling arms to the island. The latest deal for the sale of \$385 million worth of weapons was approved by the US Department of Defense on Saturday. It comes hard on the heels of the announcement last month of a potential \$2 billion arms sale package to Taiwan, including the delivery of an advanced air defense missile system that has been battle tested in Ukraine.

The Biden administration's rhetoric about installing "guardrails" for bilateral ties derived from the bleak assessment that, with the two governments at odds on a broad range of issues, preventing an unwanted conflict may be the sole common ground between Beijing and Washington.

In its recent communication with Washington, Beijing has been underscoring the need for the latter to "establish a correct outlook on China". This is rooted in a keen understanding of the growing danger of the ill feelings toward China if left unchecked among both the general US public and political elites, particularly in the US Congress.

The current Taiwan leader's US stopovers, like those of his predecessor's, are a game of dangerous potential, because they can at once be exploited by Taiwan's independence seekers as a means to hijack such ill feeling to their own ends. The consequence would undoubtedly be disastrous if Washington ends up heedlessly dancing to the pipes-and-drums tune of the separatist forces in Taiwan.

As Beijing repeatedly stresses, Washington should recognize the serious harm that the Taiwan separatists have caused to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, honor the commitment it has made to not support "Taiwan independence", stop official exchanges between the US and Taiwan, and stop sending wrong signals to the "Taiwan independence" separatist forces.

Beijing will closely follow the development of the situation and take resolute and forceful measures to defend China's national sovereignty and territorial integrity as appropriate.

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## Cai Meng



## Opinion Line

## Opening up medical sector brings benefits to all parties

On Friday, the National Health Commission and three other departments jointly issued a pilot work plan on further opening up the medical sector. It proposes allowing the establishment of wholly foreign-owned hospitals in nine provincial-level regions including Beijing and Tianjin, with the exception of traditional Chinese medicine hospitals. It has also set forth clear regulations regarding pilot conditions and management measures.

Some worry that it might affect the domestic hospital system but that worry is unnecessary. In 2023, the number of hospitals in China reached 38,000. The addition of these wholly foreign-owned hospitals is not expected to significantly impact the overall development of the national hospital system or the basic medical services.

The primary service targets of the newcomers are domestic residents with diverse medical needs and foreign nationals studying, working, or living in China, offering them services that complement those provided

by other hospitals so as to better meet the public's varied healthcare demands.

Furthermore, introducing high-level wholly foreign-owned hospitals is conducive to enhancing the investment environment for foreign enterprises and expanding high-level opening-up.

At the same time, the management concepts, methods, and service approaches of these hospitals can serve as references for the development of domestic hospitals. This is clearly reflected in the work plan, which requires investors to provide internationally advanced hospital management concepts and service models, leading-edge medical technology and equipment, and to supplement or improve local deficiencies in medical service capabilities, medical technology, and medical facilities.

To ensure the opening-up measures are carried out well, the work plan also stipulates that wholly foreign-owned hospitals must comply with the general requirements of laws and regulations such as China's Biosecurity

Law and Data Security Law.

It specifically requires that hospital information management systems be integrated into local medical service supervision platforms, and that servers storing electronic medical records and medical equipment information be located within China, thereby ensuring the security of medical information data.

As China's economy and society continue to develop and people's living standards rise, there is a growing demand for multilevel, diversified, and internationalized medical health services.

Allowing the establishment of wholly foreign-owned hospitals is just one of many measures China is taking to open its medical sector. In recent years, multinational companies have increasingly invested in China's medical field, such as in the manufacturing of medical instruments and devices, with investment growth reaching 57.3 percent in the first three quarters of this year.

— THE NATIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION  
OFFICIAL WEBSITE

## Public must beware falling into trap set by BBC

Uniqlo founder Tadashi Yanai said in a recent interview with the BBC that Uniqlo does not use cotton from China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. In response, a spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the hope that relevant companies would resist political pressure and undue interference, and make independent business decisions that align with their own interests.

The BBC, which is known for its anti-China stance, no doubt hoped to stir up trouble with its interview and other Western media outlets have obliged by hyping up this matter, suggesting that Yanai's remarks could expose Uniqlo to the risk of being boycotted by Chinese consumers, and claiming that Tokyo will align with the West on this issue.

In fact, not long ago, Yanai criti-

cized the push for "decoupling" from China by Japanese clothing companies as impractical and had previously declined to comment on whether Uniqlo uses Xinjiang cotton. This time the question was laid as a trap and he has fallen into it.

Japan and some Western countries are commercial competitors, not allies, particularly in industries such as apparel, where there are clear conflicts of interest. If Japan blindly echoes baseless rhetoric from Western politicians under the guise of "political correctness", it risks not only harming its actual interests but also losing the autonomy of its commercial decision-making.

One fundamental fact is that the number of Uniqlo stores in China has long surpassed those in Japan, which highlights how the company has benefited from the dividends of China's

rapid development.

The malicious questions posed by certain Western media serve as a reminder that the media landscape is complex, and some Western media are unethical.

Similar incidents have occurred before, emphasizing the need for rationality in addressing these issues and seeing through the deceptive narratives of Western politicians and media.

As mature and rational citizens, Chinese consumers should not be provoked into knee-jerk reactions by the manipulations of some Western media outlets. Today's China is more confident than ever, viewing the world in an equal manner and engaging with world affairs with greater poise. Such tricks should be dismissed with disdain.

— PEOPLE.CN

## What They Say

## Canada tying itself in knots trying to appease neighbor

Canadian Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said on Friday that the three members of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement think there is an opportunity for them "to work together to have a fully aligned policy on China".

Apparently this policy is to "protect all of our workers and to ensure that we are supporting each other in this really important effort".

According to the official website of the US Trade Representative, the USMCA that came into effect in 2020 to replace the 25-year-old North America Free Trade Agreement is intended to support mutually beneficial trade leading to freer markets, fairer trade, and robust economic growth in North America.

However, as early as 2020 when it

was freshly signed, the USMCA was generally believed to show a strong protectionist tendency that restricted trade and investment both within the region and beyond.

The fact is that the agreement fails to solve the trade problems and disparities between the United States and its two neighbors, and Freeland's words are in fact a response to the US waving its club of protectionism at its two neighbors, rather than anything China has done.

Freeland's remarks show that she wants to divert the next US administration's attention from Canada to China.

China was reportedly among the topics of the meeting between the US president-elect and the visiting Cana-

dian prime minister in the host's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida on Friday.

The foreign ministers of China and Canada have met three times this year, in Munich, Beijing and Lima respectively, and have maintained close communication via other channels. In all these exchanges the Canadian side has clearly expressed its commitment to promoting bilateral relations.

In other words, Canada is trying to please a power that waves a protectionist club against it while hurting a nation that has interacted with it frequently to improve the bilateral relationship.

Unwise is the politest way to describe its approach.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## COMMENT



China and the World Roundtable | China a contributor to global development

Editor's note: China has proposed initiatives to enhance global development and cultural exchanges. Experts share their views with China Daily on China's contributions.

Djoomart Otorbaev

## Freight trains facilitating regional growth

Rail traffic across the Eurasian continent has been proliferating this year.

Cooperation between the countries along the route and significant improvements in both hard and soft transport infrastructure have contributed to this trend.

As a result, rail freight between China and Europe has become not only more reliable, faster and greener but also more cost-effective than shipping. By August this year, the cost of shipping a 40-foot container by train from the Chinese mainland to Poland was less than half the cost of shipping.

Besides, the freight train takes about nine days to reach the destination, compared with 35 to 40 days by sea.

The ongoing conflict in the Red Sea region has led to a 67 percent decline in shipping between China and Europe via the Suez Canal. Consequently, there has been a notable rise in sea freight rates, which is now higher than rail freight rates. For example, between January and mid-August this year, the cost of shipping a forty-foot equivalent unit (FEU) from Shanghai to Rotterdam increased by 78 percent, reaching \$7,961, according to the Drewry World Container Composite Index.

In contrast, rail freight rates have remained relatively stable. By August, shipping rates between China and Europe were already 59 percent higher than the average rail freight rate, which held steady around \$3,240 per FEU for most of 2024, according to the Eurasian Rail Alliance Index.

However, it is important to remember rail transport has a limited capacity

compared with shipping. The average freight train from China to Europe typically carries about 150 twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) containers per trip, while the large ocean liners operating on this route can hold up to 24,000 TEUs, which about 160 trains would be needed to carry.

From January to September, the volume of rail freight between China and Europe continued to rise, with the trains making 14,689 round trips, up 13 percent year-on-year. These trains transported 1.57 million TEU of goods, an increase of 11 percent year-on-year. During the first seven months of the year, more than 50 trains operated daily.

These freight trains connect 224 cities across 25 European countries, and more than 100 cities in 11 Asian countries. The increasing trade between China and the European Union has been the primary factor driving the growth of transport. In 2023, trade between these regions reached €739 billion (\$783 billion) for imports and exports, accounting for 15 percent of total EU trade. This figure is close to the 17 percent for the US.

In comparison, in 2000, the share of the EU's trade with the US was about 24 percent of the total, while the share of trade with China was only 5 percent. It should also be noted that China has become the largest exporter to the EU, with a 20 percent share of the total. The US, incidentally, has a 14 percent share.

The rapid development of rail transport between China and Europe has significantly accelerated the socioeconomic development of China's inland regions. A decade ago, the more devel-



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oped coastal areas dominated international and regional trade thanks to their easy access to seaports.

However, with the establishment of the Eurasian railway bridge, the less economically developed inland provinces of China have experienced a substantial boost in their development. These provinces have become vital logistics and trading hubs, and strong manufacturing bases.

Take the city of Xi'an and the province of Shaanxi. Since the launch of the China-Europe rail route from Xi'an in 2013, the number of trains serving the city has grown significantly. In the first year, there were 46 trains; by 2023, that number had surged to more than 5,300. Today, Xi'an International Port Station operates 18 regular international routes that span the entire Eurasian continent. According to China Railway, 2,372 trains passed through the Xi'an route from January to June this year, transporting 250,000 TEUs. These figures represent increases of 13.1 percent and 10.4 percent respectively compared to the previous year.

This year's customs data show that Shaanxi, Zhejiang and Jiangsu were the leading exporter-provinces through the China-Europe freight trains, while Shaanxi, Liaoning, and Fujian were the top importer provinces. In previous years, the eastern coastal provinces typi-

cally occupied the top 10 positions on the list of highest exporter-importer provinces, with Shaanxi ranking seventh or eighth.

Many of China's inland cities and provinces have experienced a similar transformation. New and efficient trade links have created new business opportunities in China's landlocked regions, attracting both domestic and foreign investment, promoting international trade, and expediting economic development. Additionally, the creation of millions of new jobs in the inland regions has increased the flow of migrant workers from the eastern and southeastern regions to the western and northwestern regions.

The relocation of numerous industrial companies to landlocked provinces has proven beneficial due to lower capital costs and wages, which in turn has enhanced their competitiveness. Additionally, the development of railways has enabled these companies to reduce transit time and deliver goods directly to their customers in Europe.

The Belt and Road Initiative, launched in 2013, has greatly contributed to the massive increase in rail freight across the Eurasian continent. Cross-continental freight between China, countries along the ancient Silk Road and Europe has increased substantially. And the further development of this route will enable rapidly growing China to effectively and smoothly trade with countries in Central Asia and Europe, and sharpen its competitiveness.

The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Muyi Yang and Shiyao Zhang

## China and ASEAN rising together on the green front

That Asia is rising is evident from the fact the region accounted for 44 percent of the world's GDP in purchasing power parity terms in 2023 — a significant leap from 36 percent in 2010. On the other hand, Europe and North America have seen their shares dip, with Europe's falling from 26 percent to 22 percent and North America's from 21 percent to 18 percent.

This shift in global economic gravity is not driven by China alone. Southeast Asia's rapidly expanding economies — Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam — are also reshaping the global economic landscape. Since the 2008 global financial crisis, Southeast Asia has achieved sustained growth, with real regional GDP expanding at an average annual rate of more than 5 percent through 2019.

While the COVID-19 pandemic slowed its momentum in 2020 and 2021, Southeast Asia's economic recovery is now well underway. The Asian Development Bank projects regional growth of 4.6 percent in 2024 and 4.7 percent in 2025 — higher than the global averages and outpacing major economies such as the European Union, the US and Japan.

As Southeast Asia strives to become the epicenter of growth, the global transition to clean energy presents an enormous opportunity to the region. With abundant natural resources, a strong industrial base and competitive labor advantages, Southeast Asia is well positioned to capitalize on rising global demand for clean energy technologies, ushering in a new era of green growth.

Partnering with China, the global leader in clean energy, is a promising strategy for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states to navigate their journey toward green prosperity. China currently holds more than 80 percent of the global market share in all stages of the solar photovoltaic supply chain, from polysilicon to cells and modules. In electric vehicles (EVs), China accounts for nearly 90 percent of global cathode manufacturing capacity and almost all of the anode capacity — both essential for making mobility batteries. It also produces more than 80 percent of the world's battery cells and over half of global EV output.

In 2023, China's exports of the "new three" industries — solar cells, EVs and lithium batteries — amounted to 1.06 trillion yuan (\$147 billion), a 30 percent increase over the previous year.

China's rise to clean energy dominance didn't happen overnight. It was built over decades of sustained investment, strong research and development support, and the creation of integrated industrial clusters. These efforts have enabled Chinese companies to evolve from relying on cost advantages in labor and materials to leading in advanced manufacturing and innovation, turning cutting-edge concepts into globally competitive products.

By partnering with China, ASEAN members can harness its technological expertise and manufacturing capabilities to fast-track their own development. This collaboration can enable industrial upgrades, spur economic growth and create jobs, while providing substantial business opportunities for Chinese companies and investors, creating a mutually beneficial cycle.

This collaboration is already yielding positive outcomes. Southeast Asia's solar industry, for example, has expanded rapidly, partly due to Chinese investment. Trina Solar, a major Chinese solar power equipment manufacturer, has set up production facilities in Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

By the end of 2022, Southeast Asia had become the world's second-largest producer of solar modules, trailing only China. The region's total module production capacity reached 70 GW, a striking leap from an almost negligible level just a few years ago.

Moreover, the region has made remarkable progress in ascending the supply chains, particularly in solar cell manufacturing and polysilicon production, partly with the support of Chinese companies.

In the EV sector, too, China's role is growing. BYD, one of the world's largest EV manufacturers, has established manufacturing plants in Thailand, making the country a key hub for EV production in Southeast Asia. The move is helping Thailand to achieve its ambitious EV targets and its aspiration to become a significant player in the global EV market.

For trade-dependent Southeast Asian countries, collaborative strategies — such as trade, technology transfer, jointly research, and investment — have long underpinned socioeconomic progress. Maintaining and deepening these collaborative ties, rather than retreating into economic fragmentation, is essential for realizing the region's full potential for green growth. And both sides, China and ASEAN, have the Belt and Road Initiative to thank for that.

Cooperative efforts, through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), to establish an interconnected regional supply chain — characterized by multiple, overlapping dependencies — could also reduce the risk of any single country dominating the entire supply chain and "weaponizing" economic interdependence. In today's complex geopolitical climate, where resilience and economic security are of paramount concern, this collaborative approach is increasingly vital.

Ultimately, a closer partnership between China and Southeast Asia can lead the world on a path to green growth, strengthening economic ties, enhancing regional resilience, and promoting sustainable development. Such a BRI-powered partnership would set a powerful global example of what can be achieved when economies come together for the common good, inspiring broader cooperation to accelerate the transition to a clean, sustainable and prosperous future for all.

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Essam A. Sharaf

## Response to the call of the times

Understanding China means recognizing not just its economic power and global influence, but also its unique ability to balance strength and cooperation. China's willingness to assist other countries because of its deep-rooted cultural values of harmony and cooperation sets it apart on the global stage.

Therefore, in this article, I have decided to explore the global challenges of our time and examine how China's unique civilizational approach and refined cultural values provide a distinctive perspective on overcoming them.



The author is a former prime minister of Egypt, and now serves as the cultural ambassador of Chinese Hehe culture.

Our world is at a crossroad. We must decide whether to maintain the status quo and face potential self-destruction or chart a new course toward global unity by making significant changes to save human civilization. No single country or region can face such global threats. As humankind, we are one, and we should work and cooperate as one.

I want to highlight the significant contribution of historian Arnold Toynbee who wrote a 12-volume study called *A Study of History*. This work of comprehensive research, conducted over 30 years, delves into the rise and fall of civilizations. Toynbee introduced the concept of "challenge and response", which proposes that civilizations thrive when they adeptly respond to challenges but deteriorate when they fail to respond innovatively.

To confront the existential threats facing human civilization, we must have a clear vision of the future we are moving toward. We must strive together for a prosperous future, uniting to build a global community. This notion highlights the importance of the call of the time: building a community with a shared future for mankind, as emphasized by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

In this context, three questions arise regarding a community with a shared future for mankind. First, what does the concept mean?

A community with a shared future means that all countries have equal sovereignty — none should intervene in the internal affairs of others; that countries should jointly manage global affairs democratically, rather than through the dictates of the most powerful states; that countries should engage in "win-win cooperation" to "build a world of common prosperity"; and that countries should treat the diversity of civilizations not as "a source of global conflict, but as an engine driving the advance of human civilizations".

Second, what are the required changes in international relations?

There are at least five major changes in international relations: developing a new model for major-power competition; shifting security concerns to nontraditional threats; promoting win-win economic cooperation instead of zero-sum trade and technological competition; integrating non-Western practices and governance with the Western system of universal values; and managing economic development in a way that ensures ecological balance.

And third, how can we build it?

Building a community with a shared future is aimed at promoting global prosperity. To achieve this, we need mechanisms to achieve global trust, peace and development, ultimately leading to global prosperity. We don't have to reinvent the wheel in pursuing these goals. China has introduced these values and the necessary mechanisms to the world through global initiatives, which I believe are essential building blocks for forming a community with a shared future.

The China-proposed Global Civilization Initiative aims to foster trust and respect among individuals from different cultures and civilizations worldwide. The Global Security Initiative focuses on resolving conflicts through dialogue and consultation to achieve peaceful resolutions and to prevent a return to the Cold War era.



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Lastly, the Global Development Initiative provides a clear road map for development through its unique set of core concepts and priorities.

And all these three initiatives are anchored by the principles of the Belt and Road Initiative whose primary goal is to improve infrastructure connectivity to promote trade and realize common prosperity.

It is worth emphasizing that the values behind these initiatives, namely trust, peace, and common development and prosperity are deeply linked to Chinese culture.

As a cultural ambassador of Chinese Hehe culture, I want to stress this link. I cannot find a better way to stress than what President Xi said to summarize Hehe culture in his work, *Zhejiang, China: A New Vision for Development*: "Our ancestors created an incomparable culture, a quintessential part of which is the Hehe culture. The first 'He' of Hehe indicates harmony, peace and balance. The second 'He' indicates convergence, unity and cooperation. Such inclusiveness is reflected in the traditional thinking of 'valuing harmony and esteeming balance', 'being understanding and open-minded', 'embracing the world through virtue', and 'living in harmo-

ny without uniformity'. This is a cultural ideal that our people seek. Harmony between nature and society and between the individual and the group is the ideal of our people and the basis of our cohesiveness and creativity."

I believe the values of Chinese culture closely align with those needed to build a community of a shared future: trust, peace, and development. Additionally, I am convinced that Chinese culture can play a significant role in establishing a world order founded on dialogue, rules and multilateralism, allowing all countries to prosper and share a common future.

It is time to explore the past to discover our ancestors' valuable and virtuous principles, utilize these priceless treasures to shape our future, and emphasize that the challenges we encounter as a global community require global cooperation without any exclusions.

It is time to join hands and work together, embracing the spirit of Hehe culture and responding faithfully to the call of the times to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

# GLOBAL VIEWS

MICHAEL DUNFORD

## Global symbiosis

Just governance, harmony and high-quality development are the cornerstones of the community with a shared future that China envisions

In 2017, President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech at the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland, launching the goal of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and asked the following questions: What has happened to the world



and how should we respond? Where did we come from? Where are we now? And where are we going?

Then in May of the same year, he pointed to three deficits: the peace deficit, development deficit and governance deficit.

In a sense, President Xi pointed to the limits of the Western modernization paths and the need for a new path of high-quality and people-centered world development and for a corresponding transformation of international governance and governance capacity: a development and governance path that moves humankind forward while addressing the problems associated with the modernization and development paths that have prevailed hitherto.

Associated with the Chinese concept of common prosperity at a global scale, the community President Xi has proposed involves: development centered on quality and the rapid diffusion of innovations of successive industrial revolutions; joint contributions and co-responsibility for shared benefits and equitable evolutions of the primary, secondary and tertiary distributions of income; ecological civilization and greater harmony between humanity and nature addressing global environmental challenges such as climate change; the enrichment of people's spiritual and cultural lives; effective, effi-

cient and responsive systems of governance; and the establishing of a peaceful world and a shared world community.

Development occurs when there is a wide and rapid diffusion of innovative technologies and products that improve productivity, circularity and sustainability.

The world is on the cusp of a fourth industrial revolution, where economic growth depends on sustained real productive investment and the unimpeded diffusion of clusters of technologies and products and of knowledge and skills.

To achieve this, we need approaches to intellectual property rights, the productive and sustainable deployment of financial resources, and steps to address sustainability. These efforts should unfold in an orderly manner without sacrificing essential economic development goals — especially for less developed countries.

High-quality development also entails the creation of a peaceful world and a global community with a shared future. In this context there is clearly a struggle between Western views about international relations and those of China and much of the Global South, and between collectivist and individualist moral orders.

In February 2021, the newly appointed US Secretary of State Antony Blinken gave several speeches and interviews in which he repeated the line: "The world doesn't organize itself. When we're not engaged, when we don't lead, then one of two things happens: either some other country tries to take our place, but probably not in a way that advances our interests and values, or no one does, and then you get chaos."

High-quality international devel-

opment presupposes the sovereignty and equality of all nations, non-interference in their internal affairs and the right to choose their own development paths along with dialogue and cooperation instead of the domination and exploitation by powerful economically advanced countries of less developed parts of the world.

In the past, it was not the case that chaos has prevailed in the absence of hegemonic powers. The East and Southeast Asian interstate system was largely at peace for 300 years up to 1894 and China was largely at peace for 500 years. In that era, a polycentric East Asian *gongsheng* (symbiosis) system characterized by a set of principles, norms and codes of conduct relating to interstate relations in which large and small countries found a proper place over the course of millennia fostered voluntary and tribute trade, and peaceful coexistence.

This experience is connected with a core Chinese concept of harmony. The concept of harmony is embodied in a number of Chinese concepts applicable to high-quality international relations, high-quality development and high-quality governance. These concepts include *tianxia* (all under heaven), *guanxi* (relationality) and *gongsheng* (symbiosis). *Guanxi* emphasizes relations of reciprocity and Confucius' adage. "If you want to establish yourself, help others to establish themselves; if you want to be successful, help others to be successful." Symbiosis emphasizes the "existence of the self in relation to others rather than existence in isolation".

These core concepts differ radically from Western accounts. Individualism simply cannot generate



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sufficient social solidarity, a sufficient sense of shared values or a sufficient awareness of community which are the absolute prerequisites for the integration and cohesion of societies, nation-states, and collective solutions to global issues. Instead, relatively unfettered individualism releases centrifugal social forces and can cause social disintegration.

In a speech at the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2023, President Xi indicated that China can only do well when the world is doing well; when China does well, the world will get even better. President Xi was drawing on core Chi-

nese concepts of harmony and symbiosis widely shared in Asia and in the broader Global South. In indicating how cooperation can transform chasms that separate people and places into channels of communication and mutual understanding and benefit, he was seeking to point at ways of overcoming the divisions that torment our world. And, in emphasizing that the achievements of the historical Silk Roads were a result not of conflict and ideological contestation, but of peaceful interactions and exchanges, he reinforced the idea that helping others is also helping oneself. This speech as with many others was infused with val-

ues that express a commitment to a different world and different models of governance characterized by peace, mutual respect, cooperation and more equal and equitable development.

This path requires an effective information strategy as well as international exchanges that manage to communicate this vision and encourage its widespread adoption.

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FU CONG

## Look at the greener side

The EU must decide whether to be tough on China or solve the contradictions caused by green transformation by jointly promoting the reform of WTO green trade rules with China

After Donald Trump starts his second term as president of the United States in 2025, his "America First" policy is expected to severely impact the European Union's green transition. It will also put pressure on the EU's economic and trade relations and climate diplomacy. The EU will face a test of whether it



can maintain multilateralism and enhance competitiveness under strategic autonomy.

First, trade protectionism under Trump's "America First" policy will cause huge economic losses to the EU. During the election campaign, Trump said he would impose tariffs of 10 to 20 percent on imports, including the imports from the EU. The US and the EU are each other's largest trading partners. According to a research by Economist, Germany ranks third in the "Trump Risk Index", with its auto and machinery industries being in Trump's crosshairs.

It is expected that intensified trade protectionism will lead to the escalation of green friction between the EU and the US. The bilateral steel and aluminum trade dispute began during Trump's first term saw several fruitless negotiations under the Joe Biden administration. And the future of the EU and the US to reach a global sustainable steel and aluminum arrangement appears remote. This has hindered the EU's process of establishing an international climate club with the decarbonization of the steel and aluminum industries as the lead. This situation is not conducive for the EU to maintain the global competitiveness of its steel industry, and also damages the EU's leadership in global climate governance.

Second, Trump's energy independence policy could undermine the EU's industrial competitiveness. Trump's goal is not just to make the US "energy independent", but also to make it energy dominant. He has proposed to increase the production of shale gas and reduce the price of natural gas and electricity in the US by 50 percent. Energy pri-

ces in the EU are already higher than in the US because they include the indirect costs of decarbonization. If Trump's goals are met, the gap in energy prices between Europe and the US will widen further, undermining the EU's industrial competitiveness.

Third, Trump's cuts to clean technology investment could hurt EU investment in the US. Trump is likely to repeal or scale back the US' Inflation Reduction Act's subsidies for clean technology. This could change the course of US clean-tech investment. Commercial investment may continue to be available for mature renewable energy technologies, but policy fluctuations in the US may hinder access to non-commercial funding for less mature clean technologies. In addition, the deployment of offshore wind power and green hydrogen could also be hindered. European companies that have invested in clean technology in the US are likely to suffer.

Fourth, there is a high probability that Trump will withdraw from the Paris Agreement again, undermining the G20 members' climate ambitions and their commitment to action. The EU needs to bolster more diplomatic capacity, and invest more technology and financial resources in bringing the global climate governance process in line with the pace of the EU's green transition.

Fifth, Trump's policy of "decoupling" from China will lead to the loss of EU interests. In his first term, Trump imposed a policy of oppression on China with the trade war and technological Cold War as



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

the core elements. This time, Trump plans to raise tariffs by an additional 10 percent on all imports from China. Given the EU's close economic and trade ties with China, a US-China economic "decoupling" would put enormous

economic and diplomatic pressure on the US' allies, leaving Europe caught in the middle of the great power competition.

The EU is worried about the intensification of the ideological battle on issues such as trade and

climate protection. In addition, Trump is hostile to NATO and has a contradictory attitude on the Ukraine crisis.

After congratulating Trump on his victory, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed that the EU would import more liquefied natural gas from the US to reach out to Trump. French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk argue that the EU must build a more independent defense policy. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic are supporters of Trump's populism. But France and Germany are facing the test of domestic politics. The above factors make it a test whether the EU can maintain multilateralism under strategic autonomy and enhance the competitiveness of its green transition in the face of the "Trump Risk".

First, the EU needs to respond to Trump's economic challenge with pragmatism. Considering the contempt and violation of World Trade Organization international trade rules by the US and the fact that the world has entered the stage of "slow globalization", the EU has adopted independent unilateral instruments in some areas while complying with the basic WTO global trade rules. On the one hand, the EU continues to develop bilateral or regional free trade agreements with trading partners. On the other hand, based on its own market position, the EU uses trade defense tools and autonomous climate trade norms to compete fiercely with trading partners in the green transition.

Second, the EU needs to recon-

cile industrial competitiveness with the pursuit of strategic energy sovereignty and carbon neutrality. At an informal meeting of EU leaders on Nov 8, the EU underlined that it must close the innovation and productivity gap with its global competitors. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's commitment to a new "Clean Industrial Deal" within 100 days of taking office highlights the Commission's determination to improve the strength of the EU's clean industry. At a hearing in the European Parliament, Climate Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra laid out the EU's twin goals of pursuing "strategic energy sovereignty" and "climate neutrality by 2050".

If the EU can balance the three tasks of reducing foreign energy dependence, developing its clean energy industry and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it can protect its green transition from Trump's challenge.

Third, the EU needs to recognize that China-EU cooperation is in line with its interests, and is conducive to maintaining the global multilateral order. The EU needs to seriously assess whether taking sides and being tough on China will enable it to secure a close US-EU relationship to protect its interests. China is one of the EU's most important economic and trade partners and a co-defender of global multilateral rules. China is also one of the world's important providers of green public goods. The economic and social contradictions caused by the green transformation in the EU need to be solved by jointly promoting the reform of WTO green trade rules with China and sharing the dividends of green industry cooperation. Although China-EU cooperation will encounter more difficulties, it is a pragmatic choice with strategic significance and cost effectiveness.

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## LIFE



From left: Performers gracefully present an environmental dance on a river bank; a balcony becomes a stage; and a boat becomes a platform during the Xinshi Dance Art Festival.

Dance is making huge strides in popularity as practitioners of the art form dig deeper into local cultures to transcend boundaries and explore innovative presentations.

During the Xinshi Dance Art Festival, held last month in Xinshi ancient town, Deqing county of Huzhou, East China's Zhejiang province, fusion and "environmental dance" stole the show.

Featuring diverse performances and cultural activities that blended dance with the local cultural landscape, the festival showcased an inspiring presentation set against the backdrop of the ancient town's natural, ecological and cultural landscape.

Dancers came out of theaters, blended into the environment and performed among the delighted, if somewhat surprised, audience.

The waterways, stone roads, ancient bridges and homes became their stage. Residents and visitors were offered a variety of contemporary, classical, folk and ballet dances.

Xinshi ancient town was founded over 1,700 years ago and is now home to the Zi Huayun Dance Art Museum, which local authorities opened in June. The museum was established in memory of the late well-known dancer and academic Zi Huayun (1936-2014), who wrote books such as *Choreoecology* and was recognized for her discipline in dancing and writing.

Wang Lei, Zi's daughter, initiated the festival, donating more than 200 of Zi's items to the museum. The festival hopes to organize more cultural events, such as freestyle performances, seminars and open lectures, to popularize dance further and enhance its innovative integration with culture and nature, according to Wang.

"The 'environmental dance' is one of the artistic practices based on my mother's theoretical book *Choreoecology*. The festival offered artistic, academic and social values and we hope to continuously enrich it, drawing more people to join us, get into nature and enjoy the dancing together," she says.

"Environmental dance" is an innovative presentation of art in China that differs from that in the West or other places. In addition to natural landscapes, it often emphasizes the connection between performers and Chinese traditional cultures, according to Feng Shuangbai, president of the China Dancers Association. It is not about taking a finished dance and placing it directly in a natural environment, but about creating or prompting a

## Dancing in the streets

Festival brings art form from the stage to the people in an innovative approach, Wang Xin reports in Shanghai.



Top: Performers dance onstage during the festival, which was held in Xinshi ancient town, Deqing county, Huzhou, East China's Zhejiang province, last month. Above: Spectators watch the outdoor performances. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

dance in a specific environment. "This requires dancers to put their body movements, emotions and hearts into the creation," Feng says.

Dancing, as an art form, was born in connection with land, nature and life, he says. "When we are talking about China's 'environment', we are not only talking about the external environment but also the 'unity of humans and heavens,'" Feng says, adding that this type of dance aims to advocate for a new attitude toward life in an artistic way — to lead people to rethink their lives, needs, and the meaning and value of life.

Since ancient times, dance has been an important format for human beings to express their emotions and convey their thoughts, according to Luo Bin, vice-president of the association. "We believe that the integration of dance rhythms and the scenery of the ancient town

will create an incomparable harmony, which will draw more people to explore its unique charm," Luo says.

He adds that this type of dance, combined with natural and humanistic environments, will broaden the artistic boundaries of dance and bring new experiences to audiences.

During the three-day festival, residents of Xinshi ancient town enjoyed a dance feast as performers from across China appeared, literally, on their doorsteps and invited them to join in and express themselves.

The public's participation in dance has not come about by accident. In recent years, several dance dramas inspired by traditional culture and stories have become big hits inside and outside the nation.

According to an annual report released by the China Association of Performing Arts, box-office revenue from dance performances amount-

ed to 531 million yuan (\$73.3 million) in 2022. Dance dramas took up 56 percent of total income, making them the most popular performance art forms in the market.

*Wing Chun* is a dance drama about Hong Kong martial arts master Yip Man, also known as Ip Man, who was born in Foshan, Guangdong province. It enjoyed great success touring the world, with 12 performances in London in September and another four in Paris in October. Making its domestic debut in December 2022, the drama has presented over 200 shows worldwide.

Another dance drama hit, *Only Blue and Green*, was inspired by the well-known ancient Chinese scroll painting *Qianli Jiangshan Tu* (A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains) by Wang Ximeng of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Integrating diverse elements of dance, music and literature, it presents a profound story and a vivid painting with captivating Chinese aesthetics onstage. Premiering in 2021, it has staged over 500 shows in over 60 cities in China and abroad in countries such as Turkey, Singapore and Russia.

The dance drama boom is a result of the artists' joint generational efforts and the industry's continuous development for the past 70 years, according to Feng. "There are outstanding dancers who are good at expressing emotions with body control and comprehensive physical skills. Moreover, the new-generation choreographers are well-educated, equipped with the internet for abundant information, and some are good at telling Chinese stories," Feng says. "They are working at the best time, which is making huge progress, that is reflected in the dance dramas."

Choreographer Huang Doudou says that many stories based on traditional Chinese culture are becoming more popular and the public's awareness and aesthetics of the art are rising. People, especially children, have easier access to dance education. Moreover, many popular TV dance shows have also helped the public to appreciate the charm of the art and draw them into theaters, Huang says.

Feng adds that Chinese dance dramas explore their own paths to make such stories popular regardless of boundaries. "Audiences from across the globe love stories and Chinese dance dramas tell good ones," he says. "I see the performances absorbing the features of global counterparts, while trying to build a creative and expressive system of our own."

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## Tourists play lead role in city where stars shine

Los Angeles offers many reasons to visit whether you're a Hollywood fan, theme park enthusiast, beachgoer, art lover or foodie.

The best place to view a beautiful sunset with the backdrop of downtown and the iconic Hollywood sign on a steep hillside is at Griffith Observatory. There, you can also explore the universe via exhibits and observe the sky through free telescopes.

Indeed, commonly known as LA, the city draws tourists for its rich history, cultural diversity, modern dynamism and year-round sunny skies.

"The city offers something for everyone, making it a diverse and accessible destination," says Adam Burke, president and CEO of the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board. He attended the World Tourism Alliance's Xiangshu Dialogue in Sanya, Hainan province, last month.

Burke recommends food lovers explore the city's Michelin-starred and Michelin-recognized restaurants, enjoy culinary artistry up close and savor its vibrant street food. Art and culture enthusiasts can enjoy a variety of museums, such as the Getty Center, and street art.

By the end of this year, LA is expected to welcome 720,000 Chinese visitors, marking a 60 percent



From left: The diverse cuisine of Los Angeles draws numerous foodies. Griffith Observatory offers a view of a beautiful sunset against the backdrop of downtown LA. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

recovery from 2019 figures. Despite the shortfall, China remains the city's top overseas market.

To return to the pre-pandemic levels of Chinese tourists, Burke believes it's important to reinstate the number of direct air services and enhance US visa processing times.

The US recently announced the addition of 1 million visa appointments in fiscal year 2025, and visa wait times have decreased nearly 60 percent since the acute phase of the

pandemic. "It's a good move," he says.

Chinese visitors, he says, now include a wider age range in the 18 to 54 age bracket, compared to the previous 35 to 54 group. They encompass millennial travelers, some with children, female travelers and business visitors, each with unique needs and preferences.

"We've dedicated nearly 20 years to establishing our offices in China to work closely with the tourism industry, ensuring they have the

product knowledge to meet the diverse needs of Chinese customers," he says.

Since 2015, the tourism bureau has offered online training courses for Chinese tourism operators to understand the city's products and resources, attracting over 30,000 participants.

He notices that during the pandemic, LA continued to invest in new attractions, opting to accelerate development instead of halting pro-

jects. "There are more activities available than before the pandemic."

One example is Destination Crenshaw, a transformative project set to open soon. It will convert a 1.3-mile (2.1-kilometer) stretch of Crenshaw Boulevard into a vibrant public space celebrating the community's Black culture and creativity, with trees, parks and art installations.

"Younger travelers seek to explore both popular attractions and unique aspects of a destination," he says. "LA

is renowned for its diverse cultural influences including Latino, Hispanic, Black, African American and Indigenous."

According to China's major travel operator CTG Travel, Chinese tourists favor small group tours with in-depth experiences, personalized services and high-quality itineraries.

They prioritize health, safety and privacy in the post-pandemic era. Customized tour clients seek unique experiences, high-quality accommodations, dining, guide services and flexible itineraries.

"There is great potential in developing tourism products for LA," says Sun Tingting, who's in charge of online travel platform Fliggy's overseas business in the Americas.

In May, Fliggy partnered with the tourism bureau to offer more personalized travel services, including museum tours, sports events and beach experiences.

It's Burke's sixth visit to China since 2001 and he's amazed about the investment in infrastructure. "To boost tourism, you need solid supporting facilities," he says. "China's national rail system makes it easy to travel. China has put great effort into conveying that it's a multifaceted destination with diverse experiences. I've been to nine cities in China and each offers something different in cultural attractions, heritage and cuisine."

## LIFE

## Staging an interest in theater

Broadway director makes iconic works accessible and gives students a chance to experience the magic of performance, **Peng Chao** and **Ye Jun** report in Chengdu.

Over the past two decades, Joseph Graves, a 69-year-old veteran Broadway director, has dedicated himself to promoting and developing theater in China, while also taking Chinese theater to the global stage.

His latest endeavor was mentoring young talent in the theater industry during the Fourth SRILT Performing Arts Talent Training Program held from Nov 11 to 15 in Chengdu, Sichuan province. SRILT stands for Silk Road International League of Theatres.

In a lecture at the CDHT-CPAA Grand Theatre under the CPAA Theatres, Graves shared his experiences of directing and producing the Chinese versions of world-renowned musicals. He also answered questions from the trainees, which he thought were moving, thoughtful and intelligent. CDHT stands for Chengdu High-tech Industrial Development Zone and CPAA stands for China Performing Arts Agency.

Graves has been working and living in China since 2002, when he accepted an invitation from Cheng Zhaoxiang, then dean of the School of Foreign Languages at Peking University, to coach the university's students in performing Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*.

A total of 4,000 students signed up for auditions, although many of them had never acted onstage and some had never even watched a play.

"Those kids were really talented, but they didn't know it because they had never had such opportunity," says Graves, describing the experience as life-changing for him.

To expose more Chinese university students to the magic of theater, rather than just those majoring in drama, Graves and Cheng founded the Institute of World Theater and Film two years later, trying to integrate theater into the curriculum of universities all over China.

Graves also initiated the Chinese Universities Shakespeare Festival, which he ran for 10 years, involving over 800 universities across China and thousands of students performing scenes from Shakespeare plays.

Through his efforts, many students developed their interest and talent in theater and became successful actors, playwrights, directors or teachers.

With his support, Yang Jiamin, a former student of his at Peking University, founded the Seven Ages in 2012. The Beijing-based company, which specializes in localizing classical Western musicals, later became one of China's leading musical production companies.

During his years in China, Graves has directed and produced around 100 plays in both Chinese and



Li Jinsheng (seventh from left in the first row), chairman of the China Arts and Entertainment Group, poses for a group photo with trainees of the Fourth SRILT Performing Arts Talent Training Program. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Qian Qi, Central Conservatory of Music professor and mentor of the training program.

“After the show, I would hold workshops for these (retired) Chinese people, who never had the opportunity to perform. They did wonderful little scenes, and that kind of thing doesn't happen in the US.”

Joseph Graves, veteran director from the United States

English, including Shakespeare and classical Western plays, as well as musicals, dramas and operas from different countries and cultures. Fifteen of them were staged in China for the first time.

Graves believes that within the next 20 years, China will become the world's largest theater market, as an increasing number of Chinese people are showing an interest in plays in recent years.

"A greater proportion of young people have received higher education and know what theater is, and more people can afford to watch a play," he says. "Take Seven Ages as an example, people who started with our shows 12 years ago are still coming back, and now they bring their kids along."

An interesting discovery Graves made while touring with his one-man show around the country a few years ago is that many retired people of his age are interested in learning about performing Shakespeare.

"After the show, I would hold workshops for these Chinese people, who never had the opportunity to perform. They did wonderful little scenes, and that kind of thing doesn't happen in the US," he says.

As a big fan of Chinese culture, Graves has directed and introduced 10 Chinese plays to other countries, including *The Monkey King*, *Teahouse* by Lao She (1899-1966), and *The Wilderness* by Cao Yu (1910-96). He has also conducted experiments to adapt several Shakespeare plays into various forms of Chinese opera.

One important thing that he is determined to do is to make a movie

about the life of Zhu Shenghao (1912-44), who translated almost all of Shakespeare's works into modern Chinese under the direst of circumstances, including the Japanese invasion of China and enduring tuberculosis.

Having participated in the SRILT training program for the third time, Graves says that in the next edition, he would like to create a workshop that teaches young people how to act in a short period of time to help them get a deeper understanding of theater.

Qian Qi, another mentor of the training program and a professor at the Music AI and Information Technology Department of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, shared the innovative concepts and practices of electronic music for the contemporary stage.

He emphasizes that music creation must be people-centered, close to real life and reflect the joys, sorrows, and struggles of ordinary people. Otherwise, it will fail to resonate with the audience.

"The wide use of social media has raised the bar for creators," says Qian. "If your work is good, there is no need to worry about the market. But if it's not, no amount of promotion can save it."

Since China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, Chinese stage art has increasingly engaged in overseas exchanges, which has also raised higher requirements for its quality, he says.

"Works staged overseas must first stand up to the scrutiny of domestic audiences, which requires them to

be deeply rooted in our national culture," Qian says. "Meanwhile, universally understood art languages must be used to make the works more easily acceptable and culturally recognized."

He cited as an example the original Chinese acrobatic drama *A Thousand Years in One Finger*, for which he is composing the music. Scheduled to premiere by the end of this year, it tells of a relic restorer who, through a fingerprint on a Terracotta Warrior statue, travels back to the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC).

By integrating various elements, including Shaanxi province's iconic Qinqiang Opera and Qinyue, the traditional music of the Qin Dynasty, as well as symphonic, electronic and world music, an entirely new auditory experience that blends tradition with modernity is created.

SRILT was launched in October 2016 by the CPAA Theatres under the China Arts and Entertainment Group, a State-owned cultural enterprise that has performance and exhibition business worldwide.

The league serves as a performing arts platform to promote cultural exchanges between China and other countries. By the end of last year, it had 162 members from 45 countries and regions.

Li Jinsheng, chairman of the China Arts and Entertainment Group, says the SRILT training program, supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, invited multiple leading figures in the performing arts industry from home and abroad to serve as mentors this year.

They provided industry insights

and practical experience to more than 100 young performers, who attended the event in person or online.

"The four editions of the training program, covering fields of performance, music, stage technology and theater management, have not only enhanced the trainees' professional abilities, but also promoted people-to-people connectivity," he says.

Li says the training program aims to enlarge the SRILT's talent pool, which currently has nearly 400 people, mainly from the countries and regions with SRILT members.

Over the past eight years, the SRILT has arranged several tour routes across Asia, North Africa, Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, and the US Midwest, enabling outstanding Chinese troupes to stage a series of overseas performances, he says.

In March this year, CPAA Theatres signed agreements with Boston University and Netherlander Worldwide Entertainment respectively, to enhance personnel exchanges, promote the cultivation of performing arts talent, share theater management experience, and jointly create stage art works.

Under the company's cooperation framework with the Netherlander Worldwide Entertainment, an SRILT member, programs such as a musical incubation season and a music talent training and incubation base will be gradually implemented in Chengdu, he adds.

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From left: Joseph Graves, veteran Broadway director, gives a lecture during the training program in Chengdu, Sichuan province; US musical theater actor Brad Little addresses trainees during the program; Li Jinsheng, chairman of the China Arts and Entertainment Group, talks to trainees at the event.



## A glittering week for Chinese films at Cairo festival

CAIRO — *Brief History of a Family* won the Network for the Promotion of the Asia Pacific Cinema Award as the best Asian feature film at the 45th Cairo International Film Festival, which concluded on Nov 22.

"This is my first feature film. ... It's a great experience. It's very special, and I'm very happy to win the award," says director Lin Jianjie.

"I want to bring Chinese films to the international stage. I think this is a great achievement," he adds.

The film tells the story of a Chinese middle-class family and their son's

mysterious friend, and focuses on the bonds within the family.

The jury statement said that the film demonstrated a subtle exploration of emotions and commended its use of imagery and sound design. "They told me it didn't look like a first feature. It was mature, and it had a distinct artistic vision," Lin says.

It was screened on Nov 23 at one of the theaters in the Cairo Opera House, where the festival was held.

There was a strong showing of Chinese films at this year's festival. One of the event's highlights was

the Chinese Cinema Week, during which seven films were shown. Among them was *Decoded* directed by Chen Sicheng, who received the festival's Golden Pyramid honorary award.

"China has had a great cinema industry for a long time, and we used to watch Chinese films while studying filmmaking," says Egyptian director Khaled El-Hagar, a member of the International Critics Week jury.

"It is important for Egyptian and Arab audiences to watch films from different cultures such as

China has had a great cinema industry for a long time, and we used to watch Chinese films while studying filmmaking."

Khaled El-Hagar, a member of the International Critics Week jury

China, India and other Asian countries, not just European and American films," he says, describing *Brief History of a Family* as "very interesting and intriguing".

During the 10-day festival, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the CIFF and the Beijing International Film Festival to boost cooperation in relevant areas.

"Egypt and China have had strong relations for decades, especially in the field of arts. In fact, the cinematic and artistic experiences of both countries reflect their respective civilizations and show a similarity in dramatic style," Egyptian Minister of Culture Ahmed Fouad Hano told reporters during the

closing ceremony.

He added that artistic cooperation and closeness between Egypt and China would certainly boost bilateral cultural exchange.

As for the main International Competition, the Romanian film *The New Year That Never Came*, by Bogdan Muresanu, won the Golden Pyramid Award, while Russia's *Postmarks*, and Brazil's *Malu* got the silver and bronze pyramids, respectively.

Launched in 1976, the CIFF is one of the oldest film festivals in the Arab world, Africa and the Middle East. This year's edition featured 190 films from more than 70 countries and regions.

XINHUA

## CULTURE

# UK gallery shedding light on Chinese culture's past and present

Facility boasts wealth of interesting and unusual items, **Wang Linyan** reports in Manchester.

The gallery does not seem huge when you first enter through its rounded, arched door but it has offered rich exhibits that present Chinese culture from past to present.

Nestled within the Manchester Museum, on the campus of the University of Manchester, Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery has a collection of more than 300 objects displayed within its 190 square meters.

Paintings, porcelains, jades, textiles, and natural history specimens are categorized into five themes: environment, experiment, movement and migration, trading activities, and common interest in healthcare.

"These are all very important themes that we use to help build a sense of empathy with the visitors, so that they will have a better understanding of Chinese culture," said Bryan Sitch, former curator at the gallery, which was named in honor of the sponsor.

"And in that way, we will bring about better understanding between people from China and the UK."

Near the entrance, a long scroll in a glass case shows a parade celebrating the 60th birthday of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). It is part of a 22-meter scroll and, among the details, the viewer can see the streets of Beijing, excited crowds, the emperor and his entourage, stores, some with storekeepers, and the products on sale.

Sitch said the scroll is very important because it includes one of the earliest representations of a tobacco kiosk in China.

One of his favorite illustrations on the scroll is a homely detail of a woman holding up her small child in one of the homes off the streets, away from the parade. Upon close inspection, the woman has jewelry holding her hairstyle in place at the back of her head. A jade from the museum's collection stands next to a blown-up print of the jewelry to illustrate what was depicted.

"We thought what a wonderful way of showing this domestic detail of a woman with a child," Sitch said. "Which culture around the world does not have a sense of identification for the relationship between a woman and her small child? I think it's a very touching detail. It's one of the ways in which we help to generate empathy within the gallery."

Not far from the scroll is a highlight from the environment section, a milu deer taxidermy, which the museum purchased in 2020 from a private owner in Denmark.

"We wanted to show this because we wanted to highlight the fact that Britain and China have worked together in all sorts of ways, for instance, to improve the environment to tackle climate change, but also to rescue species that are threatened by extinction," Sitch said.

Milu deer became extinct in China in the early 1900s, but, before then, some had been taken to the West and were kept in zoos and gardens. During



"We wanted to highlight the fact that Britain and China have worked together in all sorts of way."

**Bryan Sitch**, former curator of the Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery

**Clockwise from top left:** The Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery within Manchester Museum has rich collections highlighting Chinese culture, including a Chinese desk screen, ivory chess pieces, a meridian map (photo from Manchester City Council Libraries), an umbrella presented to a British officer by the Chinese Labour Corps, milu deer taxidermy, an acupuncture model, and a fish pendant. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LEE KAI HUNG CHINESE CULTURE GALLERY OF MANCHESTER MUSEUM

the 20th century, the surviving animals were gathered together to create a herd, and they bred young deer. In the 1980s, it became possible to send deer from that herd in Woburn Abbey in the UK back to China, Sitch explained. "And there are now 10,000 of these milu deer in China again, so it's a great success story."

#### Important donations

Many of the exhibits at the gallery come from people who traveled between Manchester and China in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Other items have been acquired specifically for the gallery, including a dragon robe and Chinese display cabinet.

The blue robe was originally made for a prince at the end of the Qing Dynasty and, during the 1911 Revolution in China, he lost his life, according to Sitch. He said a missionary is thought to have bought it and brought it back to the UK, and the missionary's descendant donated the item to the museum.

The display cabinet tells the folk love story of *Niulang*, a cowherd, and *Zhinyu*, a weaver, who were sepa-

rated by the Milky Way in space and could only meet once a year across a bridge created by magpies during the Qixi Festival or Chinese Valentine's Day, which falls on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar.

A closer look at the cabinet reveals small carved wooden models of *Niulang* and *Zhinyu*, with the cowherd plowing with an ox and the weaver sitting at a spinning wheel.

And the gallery has many donations from the local community, including a life-size acupuncture model.

"It's very important to us that we show a selection of some of the finest Chinese objects, not just from our own collection but from collections across the city altogether," said Sitch.

The bronze acupuncture model was donated by Professor Shulan Tang, who runs a traditional Chinese medicine practice in Manchester.

Standing in a case themed on traditional Chinese medicine, or TCM, along with an 18th- or 19th-century Chinese meridian map collected in China by a Manchester surgeon called Thomas Bellot (1806-1857), visitors

can see the little holes in the model that show where acupuncture learners would practice in the treatment of different ailments with needles.

The display is aimed at increasing people's knowledge of healthy lifestyles and longevity.

In a case near the far end of the gallery is one of the collection's most unusual pieces — a "thousand-word" or honorific umbrella, which is a symbol of honor and appreciation.

The item was probably inspired by a custom from the Qing Dynasty in which local people presented an umbrella to a local official who was about to retire, to express their gratitude to him, according to research by Sitch and Fang Zong, the gallery's research assistant.

The umbrella on display was given to Lieutenant Thomas Walsh, at the end of World War I, by members of the Chinese Labour Corps, who worked in northern France helping Britain and France in the war with Germany and allies. Walsh gave the umbrella to Manchester Museum on Jan 20, 1920.

Walsh, who was from the English

county of Lancashire and who had studied Mandarin at the University of Manchester, served on the Western Front with the 119th Company of the Chinese Labour Corps. Because of his knowledge of the Chinese language, it is likely he was able to form a very good working relationship with Chinese people and understand their needs in the difficult and dangerous situations presented by the war, explained Sitch.

Very few of the umbrellas were presented to British or allied officers and the fact that Walsh was given one suggests he was held in very high regard.

"This is a symbol of their appreciation. And this was something that Walsh was very proud of, to the end of his life," Sitch said.

"And he was so proud of it, he wanted to give it to a museum so it will be preserved for the future. And we are very grateful to him that he did."

Because of the research, Sitch said the gallery contacted a member of Walsh's family, who provided the museum with photos of his great uncle and some of the Chinese members of the Chinese Labour Corps.

#### Unusual inventions

The gallery also has displays of some achievements of Chinese researchers at the University of Manchester, including a firefighter's jacket developed by Professor Henry Yi Li, who is based in the Department of Materials, and his team.

Sitch explained that one of Li's specialties is the design of clothing that can monitor the health of the person wearing it. The jacket on display can monitor the heartbeat of the firefighter wearing it and raise the alarm if that person is overcome by the heat.

Visitors can also see photos of Chinese people who are important to the gallery, and photos of people who are connected to exhibits. There are also photos of members of Manchester's Chinese communities.

In addition to reflecting China now and the Chinese people who live in the city today and who have contributed to the gallery, the photos, as Sitch put it, also help to make a very direct connection between visitors and the wider community.

For Sitch, one of the things the gallery is anxious to do is "tell our visitors that China is not fixed in the past".

"Many people may have a kind of outdated or stereotypical idea of what China is. In fact, when I visited China in 2018 for the first time, I was astonished at how modern China was," he said.

He added that it was astonishing to travel on trains that moved at 300 kilometers an hour, to cities replete with modern facilities, subways, parks, and gardens.

"It was a revelation to me. But perhaps more importantly, I was deeply touched by the kindness, hospitality and civility of ordinary Chinese people whom I met on a number of occasions."

The China Culture Gallery was opened in late 2022 with support from the Lee Kai Hung Foundation, after five years of preparations that included several trips to China by Sitch, who has been with the Manchester Museum for 18 years.

To Sitch and his team, the gallery is a significant addition to the cultural attractions of Manchester and aims to reinforce the city's strong connection with China. He added that it has been gratifying to see the number of Chinese visitors increasing substantially since its opening.

Sitch said he is still expecting more from the facility, with cultural events on topics including Tai Chi, calligraphy, and Chinese cuisine having already been held to make the most out of the space.

"It will bring together a range of intimate objects reflecting personal lived experiences," he said. "At the heart of the gallery, there will be space for gathering and activity — a community hub for Manchester's many Chinese groups and societies."

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## More global visitors getting historical insight thanks to palace ruins

By **HOU CHENCHEN**  
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When Frenchman Remi Launay, 29, visited Beijing's Yuanmingyuan, or Old Summer Palace, this summer, the lines of a letter by famous French poet and novelist Victor Hugo engraved on the stone provoked his emotions.

"It was a kind of tremendous unknown masterpiece, glimpsed from the distance in a kind of twilight, like a silhouette of the civilization of Asia on the horizon of the civilization of Europe... One day two bandits entered the Summer Palace. One plundered, the other burned," the 19th century writer had penned.

As Launay, from Le Mans, somberly looked around the site, he kept asking his Chinese friend, Qin Tong, also 29, why the French army had committed its acts against the palace of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) emperors — invading Anglo-French forces had set the royal resort on fire and looted it in 1860.

It was a tragedy, that such a magnificent complex was destroyed, Launay said.

When the duo subsequently shared their emotional reaction to the Yuanmingyuan visit on popular Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu, the move became an online hit, reflecting a growing interest in the site and Chinese history among local residents and foreigners alike.

Launay himself went to Yuanmingyuan amid an increasing ease of travel to China, following measures related to visa-free entry to the country for French visitors rolled out last year.

Yuanmingyuan was also chosen because of convenient transportation to access it, Qin said.

Commenting on the two friends' post online, Beijing resident Chloe Wang shared her own story about visiting Yuanmingyuan with her husband Joseph, 38, an architectural designer from England with an interest in Chinese mortise and tenon joint

building techniques.

Wang used an English audio guide to help Joseph learn about the history of Yuanmingyuan. He later expressed shock at how the British army could have burned Yuanmingyuan so completely.

He said that while he was aware of Britain's history of invading many countries worldwide, this was the first time he learned of this British aggression against China.

Both Qin and Wang were in turn surprised by their European partners' lack of awareness of the historical event. Qin observed that when it comes to Eastern culture, the French tend to focus more on Japan and South Korea, and in terms of colonial history, they place more emphasis on Africa.

Wang also mentioned that she felt British history textbooks might not give this part of history the attention it deserves.

"In Western countries, historical narratives are often dominated by the

perspective of the West, which has, to some extent, created a 'shielding effect' toward China," Zhang Yiwu, a professor from Peking University, said in an interview with Chinese media.

The image of China in the international sphere can be complex: on the one hand, the success story of China's rise as the world's second-largest economy is often celebrated but on the other hand the voices of many Western politicians and media criticizing China always seem to find an audience.

One root cause of foreign misperceptions about China is an incomplete and inadequate understanding of the country, according to observers.

Qin and Launay said that seeing the ruins of Yuanmingyuan and its artifacts displayed under glass cases for site visitors to view fueled their yearning for peace and the need for better understanding across cultures.

To better tell the story of Yuanmingyuan to foreign audiences, they



A sculpture of French writer Victor Hugo at Beijing's Yuanmingyuan in 2022. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

also suggested adding multilingual navigation services and using virtual reality technology.

This is to allow more people to learn about this "hidden history", so that they can better understand its

far-reaching impact, the two of them said.

"Cherish peace and appreciate culture — this is progress," they said.

Duan Jichu contributed to this story.